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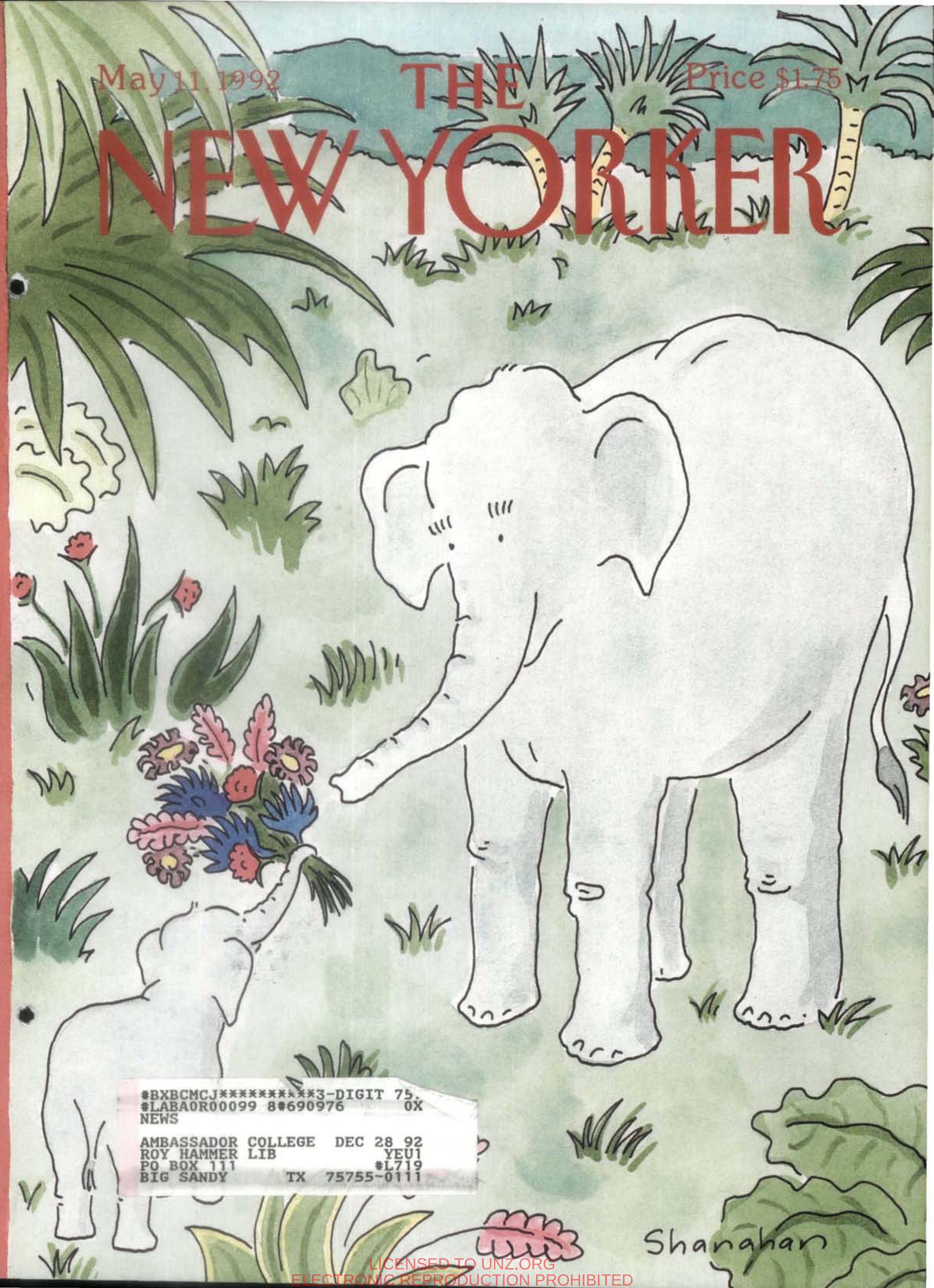

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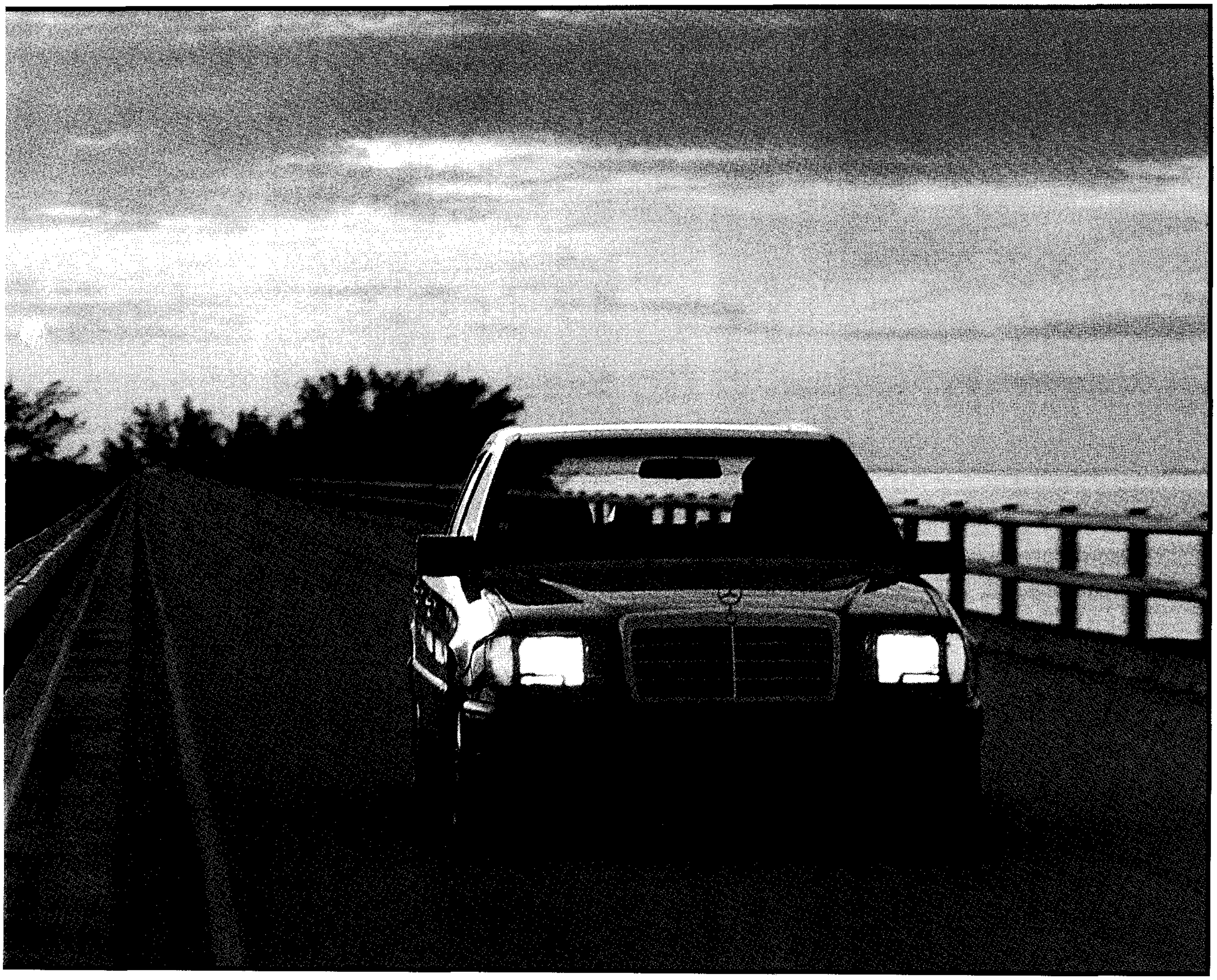

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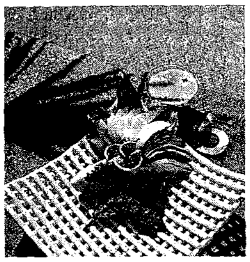

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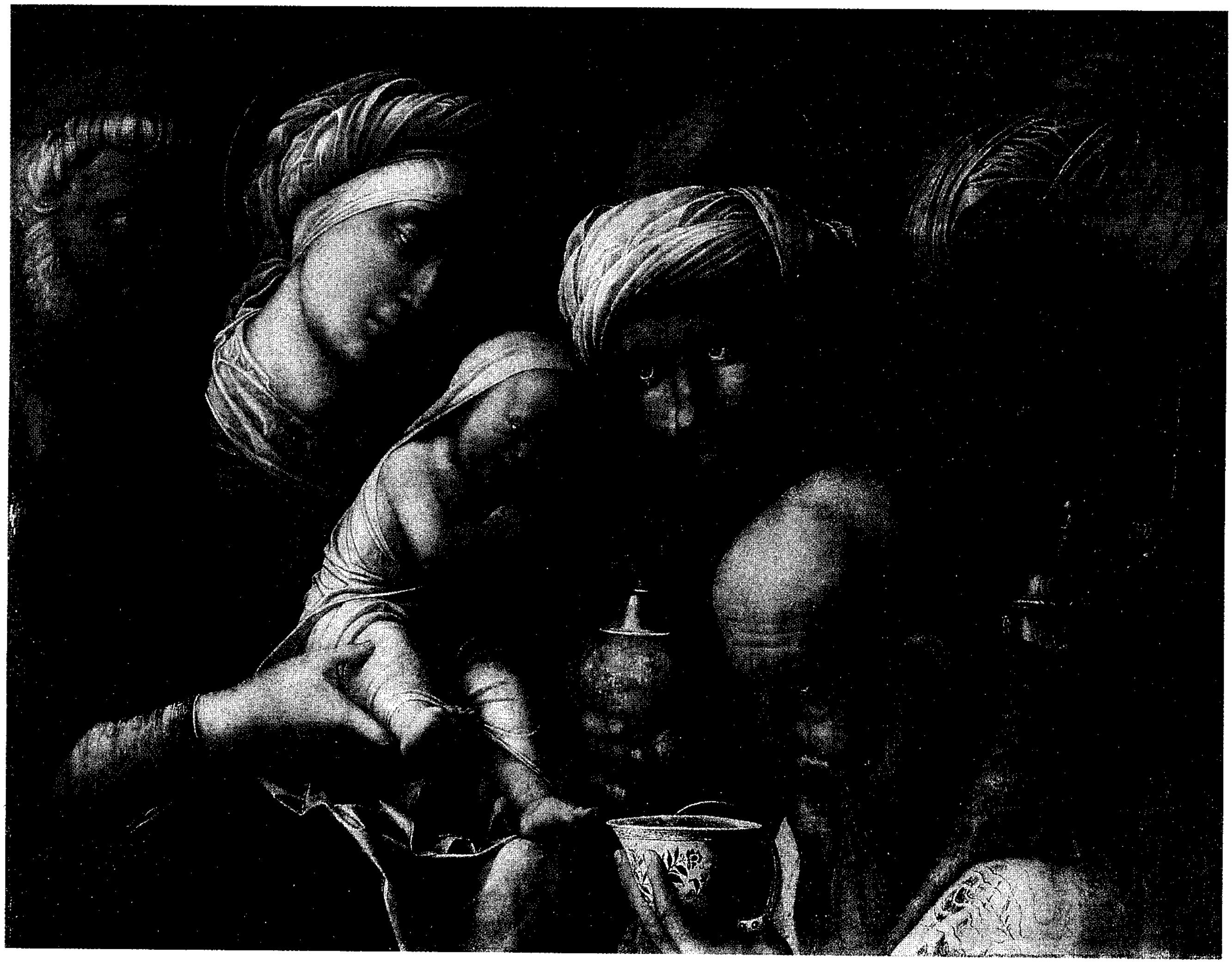

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

"I MADE my début as Aida at fifteen, in Robert Misbin's finished basement. Now Robert practices medicine at Sloan-Kettering, and I'm onstage in a dress," Ira Siff says, proudly referring to his alter ego, Vera Galupe-Borszkh, the principal diva of La Gran Scena Opera Co. At eighteen, Siff camped outside the Met for three days to secure tickets for Maria Callas's last local Tosca. Ten years ago, at thirty-five, he "found the courage" to sing female parts before a paying audience and formed an all-male troupe, most of whose members perform in drag. Ever since, they've lampooned romantic excess—both the onstage and the behind-the-curtains varieties—with love, learning, and terrific voices.

Siff, wearing a slate-green sports jacket and a tie with a subtle flower print, is at Popover Café, on the Upper West Side, grabbing a bite and reflecting on musical clowning, in advance of Gran Scena's evening of "greatest hits" (May 9, at Town Hall). "I always opposed singing falsetto and mincing," he says. (As Vera, he's a soprano, and, as a man, he switch-hits from baritone to tenor.) "It's demeaning to women. Divas are athletes, exacting artists." For the actors in Gran Scena—like those in the theatre of Charles Ludlam, Charles Busch, and the British group Bloolips—the traipse from boy to girl is not an arduous climb or a decadent fall but a slip through a passage inside the self. There's no sneering, no minimizing in their parodies: campiness is a mixture of gallant self-deprecation and pointed self-drama.

With Gran Scena, we hear soaring harmonies while opera's silly stories are spoofed. A bevy of Valkyries gloriously harmonize, then sheepishly notice that they've struck Nazi salutes. A trio of "cigarette girls" accompanying Carmen suggest girl-group backup singers without forfeiting opera aplomb. Scenes froth up in the imagination of the opera lover, but the performers' passion translates into the devotion of any insider. You don't have to care about opera to be charmed and stirred by this disciplined lunacy. Siff has achieved his ambition—"I wanted to be an opera singer, and I wanted to be a comedian."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

American Jewish Theatre—A double bill: **angel of death,** by Charlie Schulman, and **big al,** by Bryan Goluboff. Previews through May 12. Opens May 13 at 8. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

Blood Wedding—The première of Langston Hughes' translation of the Garcia Lorca play. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Circle Repertory Company—The final play of the season is **empty hearts,** a courtroom drama written and directed by John Bishop. The cast includes Mel Harris and Cotter Smith. Opens May 5 at 8. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

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Eating Raoul—Paul Bartel wrote the book for this musical adaptation of his 1982 movie. The score is by Jed Feuer, and the lyrics are by Boyd Graham. Previews through May 12. Opens May 13 at 6:45. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

The Extra Man—A new play by Richard Greenberg, featuring Adam Arkin, Boyd Gaines, Laila Robins, and John Slattery. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities—A one-woman show written and performed by Anna Deavere Smith. Previews through May 11. Opens May 12 at 8, and runs through May 23. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

La Gran Scena Opera Co.—The boys are back—for one night only—to wreak their usual havoc on all your favorite operas ("Die Walküre," "Carmen," and "La Bohème"). (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 9 at 8.)

Jock—A play by the French writer Jean-Louis Bourdon, in a translation by Timothy Johns. With Craig Wasson. Previews May 5-8. Opens May 9 at 8, and runs through May 17. (Ubu Repertory Theatre, 15 W. 28th St. 679-7562.)

Ruthless!—A musical comedy about a child star, who is played by Laura Bundy. The book and lyrics are by Joel Paley and the music is by Marvin Laird. Previews May 4-5. Opens May 6 at 6:45. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

The Sunset Gang—A musical by Warren Adler and L. Russell Brown, set in a Florida retirement community. Previews through May 9. Opens May 10 at 7. (Jewish Repertory Theatre, 344 E. 14th St. 505-2667.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Ambrosio—A play by Romulus Linney, set in Spain in 1500. Presented by the Signature Theatre Company and directed by Mr. Linney and James Houghton. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes May 17.)

Beau Jest—A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The Best of Forbidden Broadway—A tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's show, featuring both past highlights and new material. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/4/92.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Candide—An adaptation by Len Jenkin of the Voltaire classic. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes May 17.)

Catskills on Broadway—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Marilyn Michaels, the fourth member of the company, does imitations of imitations. (12/23/91) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Conversations with My Father—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try the new Herb Gardner, a bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. As staged by Daniel Sullivan, with an ace cast led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch, the play does what "Jake's Women" and "Dancing at Lughnasa" would probably do if their authors were, respectively, more sophisticated and less sentimental. Grab this one. (4/13/92) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Crazy for You—Lightly based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. The scenery is by Robin Wagner; the costumes are by William Ivey Long; and the masterly direction is by Mike Ockrent. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Dancing at Lughnasa—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the Irish memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Death and the Maiden—Mike Nichols' Americanized version of Ariel Dorfman's play (in which Juliet Stevenson took London by storm last year) is a sad disappointment. The play, which is set in "a country that is probably Chile" and concerns a woman's attempt to punish the man she holds responsible for torturing her in captivity fifteen years before, is anything but subtle, and Glenn Close, Richard Dreyfuss, and Gene Hackman are all grossly miscast. (3/30/92) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

The End of the Day—Jon Robin Baitz's new play (about an expatriate Brit physician trying to find his moral center in Southern California) has to be better and more interesting than this production makes it seem. The cast includes such fine actors as Roger Rees and Nancy Marchand, but, under Mark Lamos's sledgehammer direction, anything that there might be of subtlety or complexity in the play is swamped by performances that strive for caricature of the broadest and most banal kind. (4/20/92) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes May 24.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—The annual one-act festival. Series A, through May 10: Plays by Bill Bozzone, Craig Lucas, Wendy MacLeod, Patricia Scanlon, and John Patrick Shanley. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405. The festival continues through June 7.)

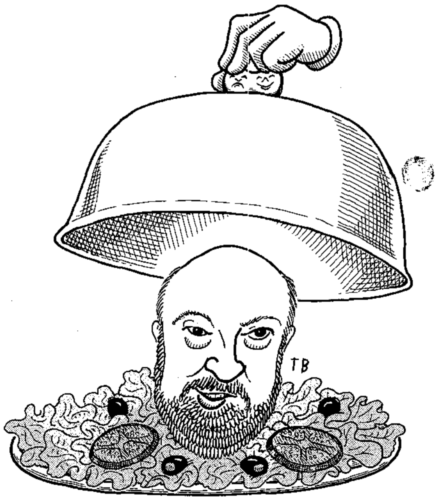
Fairy Bones—Pan Asian Rep offers two one-act plays by Laurence Yep. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes May 23.)

Falsettos—A musical conceived by William Finn and James Lapine which combines their earlier works "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland." With Michael Rupert and Stephen Bogardus. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Five Guys Named Moe—The guys are black dancers and singers of extraordinary ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan, among them "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," "Ain't Nobody Here but Us Chickens," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" This London import makes a merry and stimulating evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

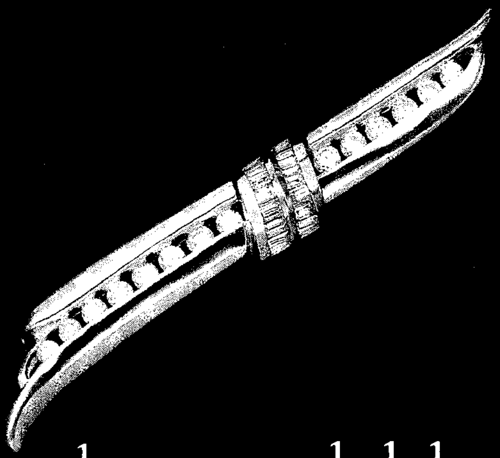
From the Mississippi Delta—In eleven scenes, Endesha Ida Mae Holland dramatizes her own rise (and journey) from the Delta (where she had been a teen-age prostitute) to the University of Minnesota and triumph in academia. The leading character, though, is her mother, a midwife called Aint Baby, who is very well portrayed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce. The role of the author is split between Ms. Bruce, Shona Tucker, and Tempest Bledsoe. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Get Used to It—A new gay musical by Tom Wilson Weinberg. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. For reservations, call 869-3530.)



Paul Bartel, author of "Eating Raoul"

I've never been good at expressing love.



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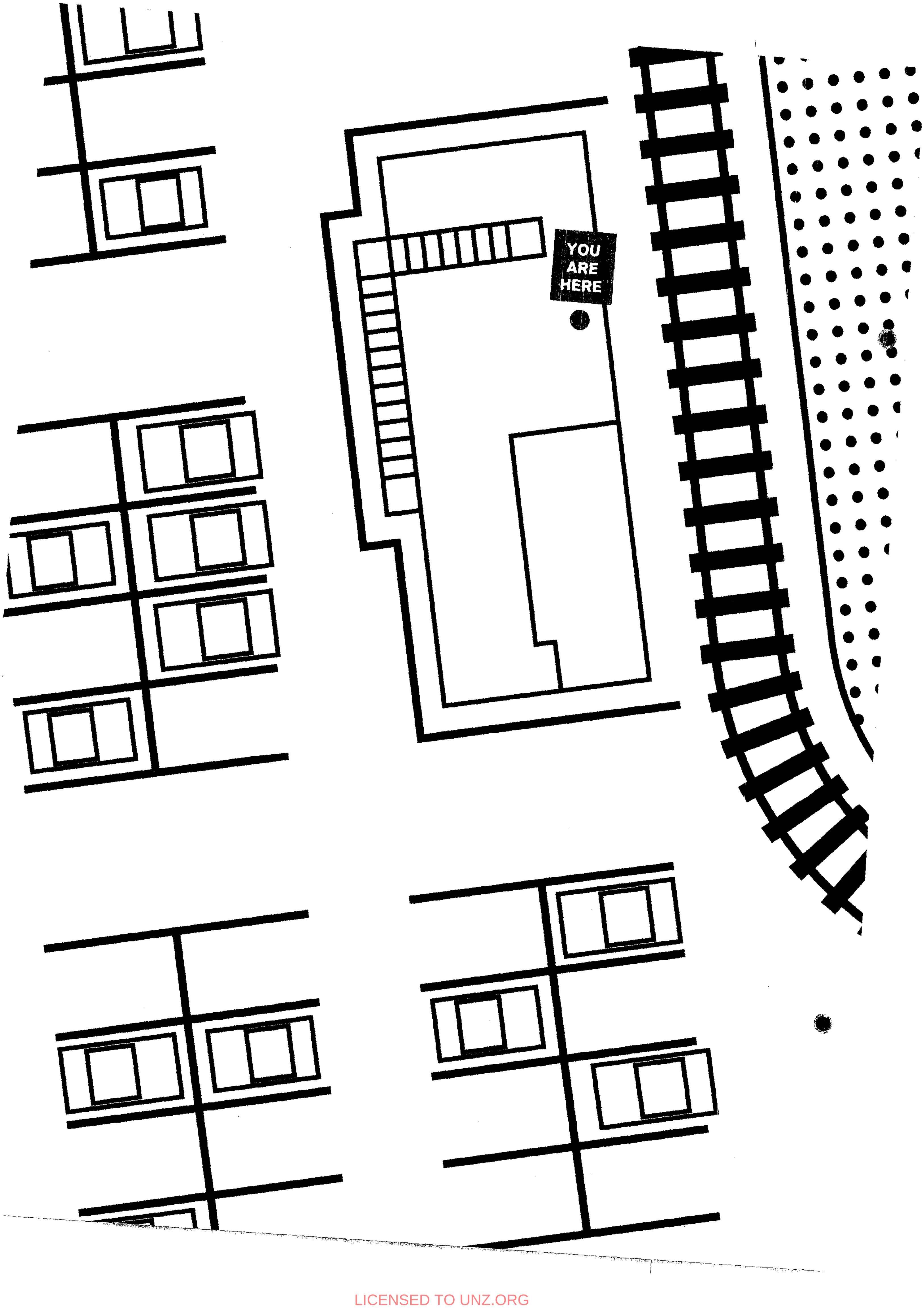
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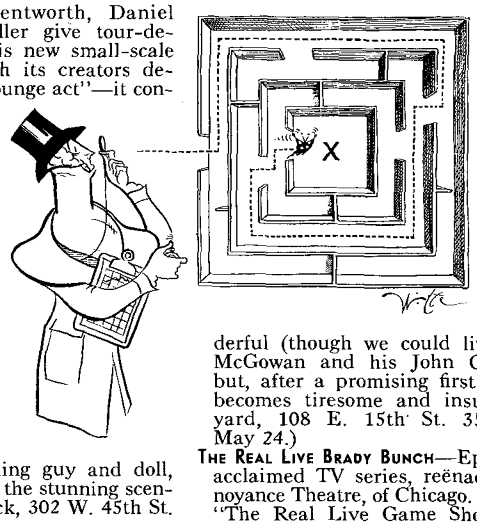
THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Grandchild of Kings—Harold Prince's enthralling adaptation of the first two volumes of Sean O'Casey's memoirs is set—beautifully—by Eugene Lee in a square in Dublin. The performances, all of them satisfying, are by the members of the Irish Repertory Theatre Company; Padraic Moyles, Patrick Fitzgerald, and Chris O'Neill are Sean as child, young man, and old man, and the invaluable Pauline Flanagan is Sean's mother. Traditional Irish songs and dances accompany the action every inch of the way. (2/24/92) (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 477-7900.)

Groundhog—A play, with music, by Elizabeth Swados. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes May 17.)

Gunmetal Blues—Scott Wentworth, Daniel Marcus, and Marion Adler give tour-de-force performances in this new small-scale musical. The show, which its creators describe as "a hard-boiled lounge act"—it concerns a Private Eye, a Piano Player, and an assortment of Blondes—has brilliantly witty lyrics, by Miss Adler; a score, by Craig Bohmler, which couldn't be more captivating or sophisticated; and a book, by Mr. Wentworth, with more twists than a Chandler simile. (5/4/92) (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl. 279-4200. Closes May 10.)



Guys and Dolls—A perfect production of Frank Loesser's perfect musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Nathan Lane and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Hamlet—Stephen Lang is more antic than melancholy Dane in this loose-limbed, harmless production. There are good performances by Elizbaeth McGovern as Ophelia and James Cromwell as Polonius. (4/13/92) (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes May 10.)

Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother—An adaptation of a García Márquez novella. In Spanish. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Jake's Women—Alan Alda is at his genial best in the new Neil Simon. The play, about an aging writer trying to come to terms with the women in his life, past and present, is pretty much what you'd expect: some funny lines and a lot of phony dialogue. It's predictable, banal, and contrived, but at least it showcases a fine cast of actresses that includes Kate Burton, Helen Shaver, and Joyce Van Patten. (4/6/92) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting, in rotating repertory, Samuel Beckett's ENDGAME and a triple bill of one-acts by Václav Havel: AUDIENCE, UNVEILING, and PROTEST. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Jelly's Last Jam—Gregory Hines has the lead in a new musical about Jelly Roll Morton. George C. Wolfe directed and wrote the book. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Julie Halston's Lifetime of Comedy—For up-to-the-minute coverage of what it is like to be "divorced, over thirty, hormonally imbalanced," you can't do better than the wit and wisdom of this multitalented actress-comedienne-sage. She's a little like Joan Rivers, a little like Joan Collins, and a little like St. Joan. Also a little like ZaSu Pitts. Among our favorite moments in this autobiographical show are the story of events leading up to Miss Halston's tragic divorce, the visit to the breast doctor, and the ritual reading and textual analysis of the *Times* wedding announcements. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Man of La Mancha—A twenty-fifth-anniversary production of the musical. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Marvin's Room—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering young man. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist, David Petrarca the director. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

The Most Happy Fella—This is one musical we think the world could be without and feel no sorrow. The story of a girl forced to content herself with some old duffer because some other old duffer wanted to teach everyone a lesson about making do with what life has to offer, it's pseudo opera superimposed on pseudo Americana. As for Gerald Gutierrez's Goodspeed Opera production, it's your basic slightly-better-than-average dinner-theatre revival. What's the rumpus? (2/24/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

One of the All-Time Greats—Charles Grodin's play about an ill-fated Broadway production can't decide whether it's a comedy (about a bunch of people putting on a pretentious flop) or a drama (about a bunch of people putting on a work of misunderstood genius). The cast, which includes Lou Liberatore and Renee Taylor, is mostly wonderful (though we could live without Tom McGowan and his John Candy routines), but, after a promising first scene, the play becomes tiresome and insufferable. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes May 24.)

The Real Live Brady Bunch—Episodes from the acclaimed TV series, reënacted by the Annoyance Theatre, of Chicago. Something called "The Real Live Game Show" comes first. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Shmulnik's Waltz—Allan Knee's comedy, with music by David Shire. Seen earlier this season at the Jewish Rep. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077. Closes May 10.)

Sight Unseen—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. (2/3/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

A Small Family Business—The American première of a play by Alan Ayckbourn. The cast includes Brian Murray, Caroline Lagerfelt, Jane Carr, and Anthony Heald. Lynne Meadow directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Streetcar Named Desire—Gregory Mosher's revival, with Jessica Lange in the role of Blanche DuBois, plays like a parody. It features a cuddly, avuncular Stanley (Alec Baldwin), a Stella (Amy Madigan) straight out of a Carol Burnett skit, and a lot of embarrassing staging. Miss Lange's acting is all "for the camera." One feels that she is trying to rescue the role of Blanche from decades' worth of assumptions about it but hasn't had much help or guidance from her director. (4/27/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Substance of Fire—Jon Robin Baitz's play about an intransigent publisher at odds with his grown children, having moved from Playwrights Horizons, seems stronger than ever in this more formal theatre. The remarkable Ron Rifkin continues in the leading role, and he is ably supported by the members of the company—Patrick Breen, Cordelia Richards, Jon Tenney, and Maria Tucci. (3/9/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Tubes—A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

Two Trains Running—August Wilson's latest, set in a Pittsburgh luncheonette in 1969, is one of those plays in which all the performances seem to be groping hotly after Tony nominations and everything is freighted with Meaning. (4/27/92) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Willow Cabin Theatre Company—Presenting a double bill of one-act plays by Louise Page: LIKE TO LIVE and TISSUE. Both with Meg Wynn Owen. (One Dream, 2 North Moore St., at West Broadway. 886-1889. Closes May 10.)

Zora Neale Hurston—A return engagement of Laurence Holder's play about the author of "Their Eyes Were Watching God," among other works. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

LONG RUNS

BREAKING LEGS: The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Karen Valentine, Ronald Maccone, and Nick Wyman. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently turned thirty-two. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.) . . . **LIPS TOGETHER, TEETH APART:** Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.) . . . **LOST IN YONKERS:** This family melodrama by Neil Simon, set in Yonkers during the Second World War, is about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **PAGEANT:** A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.) . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **THE SECRET GARDEN:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **SONG OF SINGAPORE:** A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish setting (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.) . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** The never-ending nuptials of Anthony Angelo Nunzio and Valentina Lynne Vitale. With audience participation, as you probably know. (St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4100.) . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

WHY do the performing arts so often flourish during times of political corruption? A case in point is the Kabuki theatre, which enjoyed some of its best years during the middle of Japan's Edo period (1603-1868). Under the shogunate of Okitsugu Tanuma, in the eighteenth century, the country's governmental machinery was greased by bribes, and its theatrical machinery was treated to a dazzling spurt of invention, resulting in what may have been the world's first revolving stage, as well as what was almost certainly its first *double* revolving stage—two circles, each of which could be used independently. We learned this provocative detail from "Kabuki Backstage, Onstage: An Actor's Life," a recent book by the Kabuki actor and teacher Matazo Nakamura. (On May 8, at 7 P.M., he will give a lecture on and demonstration of his art, at the Japan Society.) Our favorite history of the subject remains "The Kabuki Theater," by Earle Ernst, of which Edwin Denby once observed that "if you can keep paying attention you will find at the end that you seem to have been living in Japan for quite a while," though Mr. Nakamura's study has jumped to second place on our list. You can digest his whole story in an hour or two (Ernst's book, longer and more scholarly, is a protracted feast), and his point of view seems completely fresh—that is, he speaks of Kabuki from the perspective of how it is practiced today, with special attention to the problems it faces because of declining home audiences and the traditional caste system of training.

According to legend, Kabuki originated when a woman began to dance on the dry riverbed of Kyoto's Kamo River. Mr. Nakamura succinctly explains how a woman's dance evolved into an all-male theatre, as well as how the major Kabuki companies compare and how Japanese connoisseurs esteem a brilliant entrepreneur like Ennosuke Ichikawa, who brought his acrobatic and technically spectacular company to the Met a couple of seasons ago. From Mr. Nakamura we learned that Kabuki actors exchange their underwear for loincloths at the stage door, and that the best seats for watching Kabuki in a traditional playhouse are in the fifth to the tenth rows. (Closer than that and not only will you see the actors sweat but also you are likely to be showered with spit.) Of his own progress toward mastery, Mr. Nakamura writes, "It is often said that it is not until the age of fifty that one really has a Kabuki face. Now that I've reached the age of fifty I have come to believe that this is true."

NEW YORK CITY BALLET—May 5-8 at 8, May 9 at 2 and 8, and May 10 at 1 and 7: "The Sleeping Beauty."... ¶ May 12 at 8: "The Four Temperaments," "Ash," "Duo Concertant," and "Western Symphony."... ¶ May 13 at 8: "Donizetti Variations," "A Musical Offering," and "Glass Pieces." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through June 28.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE—May 4-5 at 8, May 6 at 2, and May 6 at 8 (a benefit): "Romeo and Juliet."... ¶ May 7-8 and May 11 at 8, and May 9 at 2 and 8: "The Firebird," "Other Dances," and "Serious Pleasures" (New York première).... ¶ May 12 at 8 and May 13 at 2 and 8: "La Bayadère." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. The season continues through June 20.)

DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM—Final performances of the engagement. May 5-6 and May 9 at 8, and May 10 at 3: "Mirage," "Medea" (New York première), and "Firebird."... ¶ May 7-8 at 8 and May 9 at 2: "John Henry," "Footprints Dressed in Red," and "Dougla." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

SCAPINO BALLET ROTTERDAM—A company from the Netherlands, in a week-long engagement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 5-8 at 8, May 9 at 2 and 8, and May 10 at 2 and 7:30.)

"FACE THE MUSIC AND DANCE"—The choreographer/director Martha Clarke and the composers Richard Peaslee and Muhal Richard Abrams talk about artistic collaboration and introduce excerpts from their works. With performances by Rob Besserer, the Western Wind (with Peter Becker), Mr. Abrams, Bradley Jones, and Robert DeBellis. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 5 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

TORI AMOS is a strange, strange case. The other day, we were flipping through the lyrics of the young singer-pianist's candid, stormy album "Little Earthquakes." Amos is in the practice of capitalizing a handful of words in each song, the result being that one can read her lyrics in condensed form: "CRUCIFY ... COURAGE ... GOD ... HEART ... LOVE ... GUILT ... I CRY." Or: "WINTER ... DRIFTS GET DEEPER ... CHANGE ... MELTS ... SKATING ... PROUD ... WHITE HORSES." Amos's lyrics are largely imagistic, full of sex and death and not a few stunningly frank turns of phrase. She has a gorgeous voice, but quite often—what with her uneasy melodies, her sudden flights into the upper register, her heavy, frantic breaths, and her little-girl whispers—she sounds disconcertingly like Kate Bush. Her song "Girl" is the sincerest flattery we've ever heard.

The other night, Amos opened the Stateside leg of her Little Earthquakes tour with a solo show at the Bottom Line. (The performance was videotaped for ABC's "In Concert" series, which gives you an idea of the remarkable sendoff that this record is receiving.) Early on, we found Amos's stage persona to be a bit off-putting, if only because it so clearly was a persona. She flung her red hair around. She writhed vividly against the edge of the piano stool. She did some outré vocalizing that struck us as high-concept yodelling. But the performance did an abrupt about-face with "Me and a Gun," an a-cappella song about a rape, which she dedicated to "a fourteen-year-old Irish girl." Amos's rendition was brutal and lovely, one of the starkest, bravest things we've seen in some time. With "Me and a Gun," Amos sloughed off her former showiness. She performed the remaining numbers—including wonderfully odd covers of the Rolling Stones' "Angie" and Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit"—with the kind of sacred hush that marks her best songs, those songs that sound least like Kate Bush and most like Tori Amos.

Blossom Dearie at the Ballroom

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town.... ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**SYLVIA SYMS** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

ARTHUR'S TAVERN, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—A quirky, endearing Village watering hole, perpetually decorated for the holidays—all of them. The musicians work in the back of the room, in a well ringed by a bar—a setup that seems to bring out the latent show-biz tendencies in some of the bar's patrons. Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy, Fridays and Saturdays to Mabel Godwin, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band. Music from nine-thirty.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—We've heard performers here have fun with the club's name, and with the fact that you can order tapas from the adjoining restaurant. The Ballroom is smart and chic, and looks even more so in this colorless neighborhood. Raconteur **DONNA BLUE LACHMAN** begins a run on May 5, with shows at nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine and eleven-fifteen Fridays and Saturdays. **MARGARET WHITING**, **ANN FRANCINE**, and **JACK WRANGLER** perform on May 11, in a benefit for the People With AIDS Coalition. Beginning on May 8, singer **BLOSSOM DEARIE** will occupy the stage every Friday and Saturday at six-thirty and (for the brunch crowd) on Sundays at three.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and those incredible shrinking aisles that turn a mid-set dash to the rest room into something of a steeplechase. Singer-songwriter **ANGELA BOFILL** claims May 5-10; pianist **SHIRLEY HORN'S** trio begins work on May 12, in a double bill with the **BARRY HARRIS** quartet. First set at nine. Dining

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and pianist-singer-cutup **BOBBY SHORT**. Music Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five.... ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—Jazz clubs aren't known for their romantic atmosphere, but Condon's at least tries. It's a low-ceilinged basement establishment, with lemon walls and abundant candlelight. **ANNIE ROSS** and her trio perform May 5-10, and **JAY MC SHANN'S** foursome kicks off on

May 12. Music at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays and at nine-thirty, eleven-thirty, and one on Fridays and Saturdays.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—The seating arrangements in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement make flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. Saxophonist **SCOTT HAMILTON** leads a quintet May 5-10. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side jazz room, one steep flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly except Sundays, when a jukebox stocked with sixties rock and soul lights up. On May 6, jazz tuba player **SAM PILAFIAN** (who carries on a concurrent "legit" career as the bass section of the Empire Brass) leads his quartet in sets that include selections from his recent CD, "Travelin' Light." May 7 belongs to **HARRY ALLEN'S** quartet, May 8 to **JUDY BARNETT'S** quintet, May 9 to the **RAY ALEXANDER** quartet (featuring Marty Napoleon), May 10 to **JOEL FORRESTER,** and May 11 to the **BILL CHARLAP** trio. Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Judys', 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—An intimate, burgundy-walled *boîte* attached to the Iroquois Hotel. In the front room, which is decorated with photos of famous Judys—and of the famous daughter of a famous Judy—a pianist keeps the happy-hour barbirds occupied. In the dining room, vocalists work out at nine Mondays through Thursdays, and at nine and eleven on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker is an airy, good-spirited place and, while music often takes a back seat to conversation, some able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. Pianist **JUDY CARMICHAEL** and saxophonist **MIKE HASHIM** are on the premises May 6-9. Music from nine-forty-five.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. May 7: the **THOMAS CHAPIN** trio, **GOD IS MY CO-PILOT,** and **GIANT METAL INSECTS.** May 8-10: **KEVIN EUBANKS, DAVE HOLLAND,** and **MARVIN (SMITTY) SMITH.** Music after nine.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—This blues bar stands apart from the Upper East Side's usual array of singles bars, and has become a big draw for the neighborhood's army of post-collegiates. The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drink concoctions lend the place a frat-house aura, but don't let that put you off: this long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. **RONNIE EARL** performs on May 7; **BLUESMAN WILLIE AND THE SOUTH STREET RUNNERS** claim May 8-9. Sets from nine-fifteen, except Sundays, when they begin at eight-forty-five.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A plain blue back room whose far wall is decorated with round things: a Frisbee, some singles, a drum head, and the woofer from a speaker cabinet, to name a few. The beer of choice here is Rolling Rock—by a landslide—and the crowd may make you feel as if you have a midterm to study for, but many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **SLEEPY LA BEEF,** of whom it has been said "He makes Johnny Cash look like a choirboy," will be here on May 8. LaBeef, a rockabilly cult figure who has been performing since the fifties, is six feet six, weighs nearly three hundred pounds, and likes to wear a black ten-gallon hat; his basso profundo hits you like a sonic boom, and he tosses off sharp salvos from a guitar that in his hands looks like a matchstick. Shows at ten on Thursdays, and at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. **VIC DAMONE,** a fifties-vintage romantic crooner and demi-legend, who hasn't performed in a New York club in over a decade, winds up an engagement here on May 10. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine-fifteen, Fridays and Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen, and Sundays at six-thirty.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. A delightful evening of Gershwin tunes winds up on May 9, and a "Western revue" titled "Cowboy Logic" opens on May 12. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

TINKLETOWN

With their sink-side attendants and their security guards, the refurbished Beaux-Arts bathrooms in Bryant Park are the most elegant such public facilities around, but they're hardly the only option for the distressed stroller in midtown. There are quite a few of them, really, and almost all of them are listed in the recently published "Where to Go: A Guide to Manhattan's Toilets," by Vicki Rovere (available from Ragged Edge Press, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012, and at fine metropolitan bookshops). The illustrated pamphlet pinpoints bathrooms on a series of maps, and keys them to categories like Flea Markets (Indoor and Outdoor), Auction Houses, and Government Buildings. The author admits that "none of the facilities listed here, with the exception of parks and playgrounds, are really 'public' in the sense that that's their primary function," and that even the public lavatories are frequently closed or unsavory (there's a list of "iffy" park options). She insists, however, that most places with bathrooms—department stores, museums, train stations—will tolerate you if you look desperate enough.

The project, which grew out of Ms. Rovere's need for pit stops during daily twelve-mile walking workouts, may be of greatest use to tourists, but even New Yorkers may be amused by the anecdotes and trivia interspersed among the listings. For instance, there's a section called "Places You'd Think Would Have Public Restrooms But Don't" (the Empire State Building, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and the Woolworth Building, among others) and another, illustrated with an antique-looking contortionist, titled "Women's Gymnastics." Don't ask.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. Show times vary.

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—Moshing, anyone? The term refers to the practice of hoisting up your Doc Martened, flannel-shirt-belted neighbor and passing him or her over a sea of hands. The Ritz is one of Manhattan's premier moshing spots, though there's plenty of room for those who don't like to be touched by strangers. May 6 belongs to the **SMITHEREENS.** The band, which was spawned in New Jersey, plays garage rock with pop-radio ambitions. They have a stomping, guitar-thick sound, and their best songs have hooks big enough to hang a side of beef on. In their early days, the Smithereens looked as though they were headed for mega-stardom, but they're still waiting. That may be because, despite their evident talents, their music hasn't evolved much, and the rock world isn't known for its patience. Also, attention seventies ironists: **KISS** will perform on May 9. Show times vary.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—**STEVE ROSS,** who'll be performing in the small, red-gold-and-green cabaret here on May 10, is a nimble and pleasing singer-pianist who specializes in the transatlantic chatter of Noël Coward and Cole Porter. Ross's physical resemblance to Porter, which has oft been commented upon, as well as his sly, chummy manner, gives his performances a nicely old-fashioned cast. Shows Sundays at eight and, upon demand, ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. S.O.B.'s dance floor is always jumping with Rastas and N.Y.U. students, and there's always someone onstage shouting "Put your hands in the air!" **BILLY PRESTON** is here on May 7; **ASTER AWEKE** is slated for May 8; and **DIBLO** performs on May 9. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, located near what was once called the Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The pillared, loftlike room is decorated in a hodgepodge, vaguely Bourbon Street manner, and sight lines are above average. But the sound system has been known to be temperamental. **EDDIE FLOYD** and **WILLIAM BELL,** with the **UPTOWN HORNS,** will be here May 6-9. Music from eight on weeknights and from eight-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—A banged-up-looking basement jazz haunt that opened in 1935 and that, with the exception of a sixties-ish mural on the back wall, looks as though it hasn't been redecorated since. Name any major jazz artist and it's a safe bet he or she has played here at some time. **JOHNNY GRIFFIN'S** quartet is on hand May 5-10. The **HARPER BROTHERS** take charge on May 12. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A relatively young club that has already managed to make a scene. Wetlands is usually thought of as a Deadhead hangout, but the club has also been the launching pad for a generation of young New York bands like Blues Traveler and the Spin Doctors. Shows here can be absurdly sweaty and tight—the club seems to have a hard time turning people away—and it can be hard to get a view of stage. Still, Wetlands is such a maze of a place that there's always some mellow corner to retire to. **BLACK 47,** which will be here on May 8, has had a brief, strange history. The group started out by playing after-hours gigs at an Irish bar downtown. The band consisted of a trombonist, an uillean-pipes player, and a singer-guitarist who sang strident variations on the Irishman-in-New-York theme. Before long, limousines were lining the avenue outside the bar and the members of Black 47 were being schmoozed by all manner of record company types. The band now has a heavy-duty agent and their show here is a clear sign that the outfit's on its way out of the pubs. Shows from ten.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those awninged eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **JAMES WILLIAMS** and **BOB CRANSHAW** work out through May 9; **DANNY MOORE'S** trio begins a run on May 11. Music Mondays through Thursdays at eight, Fridays and Saturdays at nine, and Sundays at seven-thirty.

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EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

AT the entrance to the Quarter Moon Saloon (442 Amsterdam Avenue, at 81st Street), two benevolent bruisers, each one a toll booth with a brush cut, took hold of a slaphappy young lady's limbs and swung her round like a jump rope. "Put me down! Put me down!," she squealed and slurred, though obviously hoping for nothing of the sort, for upon her release she flung herself at the ample lap of one of the big guys—missing by mere inches. "I can't believe you let me get this way each week," she said, picking herself up off the floor without assistance from them or from a nearby trio of guys too busy singing along with Rod Stewart on "Maggie May" to notice. "I'm going where people care about me."

So we followed her as she ambled downwind of a quartet of Friday-night jocks rushing the season in jammies and chicken legs, each swinging a bottle of half-chugged Bud as they made their way over to Bamboo Bernies (2268 Broadway, at 81st Street), where they got in but she didn't. "Everyone has to have proof," said the doorman. "Forget yours, too?" he asked us. (Us, who'd *driven* to Woodstock.) "But I'm a friend of theirs," the woman insisted, pointing to the jocks, now ensconced in the throng, with fresh beers, and in the midst of a syllable-perfect rap-along of "OPP," to the delight of five white guys dancing on a bench and woo-wooing in approval, fists clenched in the air.

With her hands jammed deep into the pockets of her suède mini, her diagonally hung little purse bouncing like a kid on his first pony ride, the young woman stormed on her heels, as best she could in her condition, up to West Side brewski headquarters, the Raccoon Lodge (480 Amsterdam Avenue, at 83rd Street), where she was met with open arms as loose as her own, waving to a final chorus of "Try a Little Tenderness." At last, comfortable in a room straining with pinstripes and Dockers hovering around wrap skirts, pocket Ts, and blazers, she let it all hang out on top of a pinball machine featuring the Addams Family. Everyone thought she was a riot, except the three young women who promptly chugged their Seabreezes and tumbled out onto Amsterdam Avenue, smack into three Bermudaed Rolling Rocks and a Molson. "Where are you young ladies going?" chirped one of the guys. "Anywhere you're not," snapped one of the women, very pleased with the speed of her retort, but forgetting that it was too late to drive to BAM.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"ROY COHN/JACK SMITH"—A play conceived by Ron Vawter. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. May 7-10 at 8.)

"LESBIANS WHO KILL"—A play by Deb Margolin, with Lois Weaver and Peggy Shaw. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. May 7-9 at 10. Through May 23.)

P.S. 122—May 7-10 at 8: Marga Gomez. Through May 17. . . . ¶ May 7-10 at 9: Pooh Kaye in "The Illusion of Wholeness." (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

ART

THE soul of grand opera is nowhere more alive today than in Julian Schnabel's profligately generous, absurdly impassioned, Byronically hamboned oeuvre. This artist thinks pictorially on the scale of a Meyerbeer or a Berlioz, and has in recent years taken to projecting his visions of miscellaneously charged atmospheres onto huge weathered drop cloths and tarpaulins that could hold the stage of Garnier's old Paris Opéra. The ideal of a battered gorgeousness, bountiful as well as eclectic, is what evidently impels him, and if he both looks and acts like a Belle Époque tenor, this provides the big theatrical engine with more of the steam it needs.

Schnabel's current New York engagement consists of two shows of recent paintings. At Pace gallery's 57th Street venue (32 East 57th Street; through May 30), we find the 1991 "Olatz" series, a group of six large abstractions on drop cloths with grandly simple frames. Roseate and tumultuously gestural, these paintings seem to emanate from the Rodolfo role in Schnabel's repertoire. They seem, in other words, to be about robust youthful passions, about happier days under a southern sun, about conviviality and friendship (Olatz being the name of the artist's "Basque friend"), and, perhaps most of all, about the free-wheeling life of the studio—of "La Bohème." Their charm is at once blowsy and epicurean.

The tour de force is at Pace downtown (142 Greene Street; through May 23). "The End of the Summer" is a group of four tarpaulins from 1990—each roughly the size (sixteen feet square) of a studio apartment—that were distressed in Schnabel's open-air Montauk "studio." These dank gray behemoths effortlessly seize the imposing walls of this space, yet they also seem to deliquesce into vaporous passages of stage weather. Schnabel's habit of epic improvisation has yielded a marvellous new effect here: the several violet-blue, linear figures that look like antique etchings, or like stamp marks left by ghosts, are in fact imprints made by crumpled, paint-soaked linens that the artist flung against the tarps. The stage is set here for a wondrous "La Tempesta." When Schnabel's "Hurricane Bob" series blows in next month, perhaps we'll be better able to tell whether his ideal role is as Caliban or Prospero.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A large gathering of paintings, drawings, and prints by the Paduan Renaissance master Andrea Mantegna. Starts May 7. . . . ¶ Barbizon, in the Forest of Fontainebleau, was a meeting place and an inspiration for several French landscape painters in the eighteen-fifties and sixties. A large sampling of works by these artists—Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, and others—is on view. Through May 10. . . . ¶ A retrospective of black-and-white and color photographs by Helen Levitt. Through June 28. (See Photography.). . . ¶ Fifty works by William Harnett (1848-92), an Irish-American painter who was the father of the trompe-l'oeil school. Through June 14. . . . ¶ "Modern Design: 1890-1990" shows off the museum's holdings in twentieth-century furniture, architectural and design drawings, glass, ceramics, and other objects. . . . ¶ The recent donation of the Perls collection—a hundred and sixty-three objects from the kingdom of Benin—has substantially redefined the museum's African holdings. This exhibition of the collection is a welcome relief from the rigid theatre of many of the museum's blockbusters: it enables viewers to make their own discoveries. . . . ¶ "American Rococo, 1750-75." Furniture, silver, paintings, engravings, ceramics, and glass made in pre-Revolutionary America. Through May 17. . . . ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent." Through June 28. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden, planted with eight sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Antoni Tàpies in Print" will present more than a hundred lithographs, intaglio prints, and illustrated books, from the forties to the present, by the Catalan artist. Starts May 7. (A complementary show of prints and books is at Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St., through May 29.). . . ¶ Photographs by Gertrude Käsebier (1852-1934), including her genre scenes, allegorical compositions, and portraits of New Yorkers, Native Americans, and fellow-photographers. Through July 14. . . . ¶ Twenty-three videotapes, mostly from the seventies, by Joan Jonas, Nam June Paik, and William Wegman. Through July 16. . . . ¶ A display of glass and ceramic tableware by Finnish designer Kaj Franck. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until early summer.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Terry Winters, who is in his early forties, is a very good, serious painter of organic forms in earthy pigments. His work develops slowly, rather ponderously at times, and might be marvellously well represented by a strictly edited, fast-paced exhibition of, say, fifteen to twenty paintings from the past decade, and a more copious array, perhaps, of works on paper. The Whitney, however, apparently in blithe ignorance of the nature of Winters' endeavor and appeal, has instead mounted a turgid exhibition of more than a hundred paintings and drawings and thirty prints. If this artist's work and reputation weren't so damn solid, this show might do him in. Through May 10. . . . ¶ A well-framed, expertly installed, compact exhibition of recent "Pastels" by Joan Mitchell. They're beautiful: vibrant, nimble, and utterly authoritative, though seemingly unfettered. Mitchell is in peak form here. Through June 21. . . . ¶ Eighty-five works by Richard Prince, including his "re-photography," drawings, collages, silk-screen paintings, and wall reliefs. Through July 12. . . . ¶ A retrospective of photographs by Paul Strand. Through May 17. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Contemporary Wood Sculpture" includes works by Kenji Fujita, Jane Greengold, and Louise Nevelson, among others. Through June 7. . . . ¶ "Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"The Streets of Dai Fau," a show of photographs by Arnold Genthe (1869-1946) which depict San Francisco's Chinatown before 1906. Through June 30. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—Fifty works by the colorful and prolific painter Chang Dai-chien (1899-1983). Through July 19. . . . ¶ "The Cosmic Dancer." The tenth-century Hindu bronze of Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance, is the centerpiece of this exhibition of fifty bronze, stone, and wood sculptures from India and Southeast Asia. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Zarina: House with Four Walls," an exquisitely installed and concise show of cast bronze and painted aluminum sculptures (along with some beautiful wall-reliefs made of cast paper) and etchings by Zarina Hashmi, a thoroughly wordly Indian-born artist who seems to be constitutionally incapable of hitting a false note. This artist's work is at once austere and sensuous, archetypal and intimate. This deceptively small show could prove an exalting experience for anyone willing to pause and look. Through May 12. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—A hundred and twenty-six photographs by the Austrian-born botanist and explorer Joseph Rock (1884-1962), who documented the cultures inhabiting the borderland between Tibet and China before the Chinese Revolution. Through July 31. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 7.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Bridges and Boundaries: African-Americans and American Jews." This show—comprising three hundred and fifty art works, photographs, and documents—explores the complex relationship of coöperation and tension between the two groups. Through July 19. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

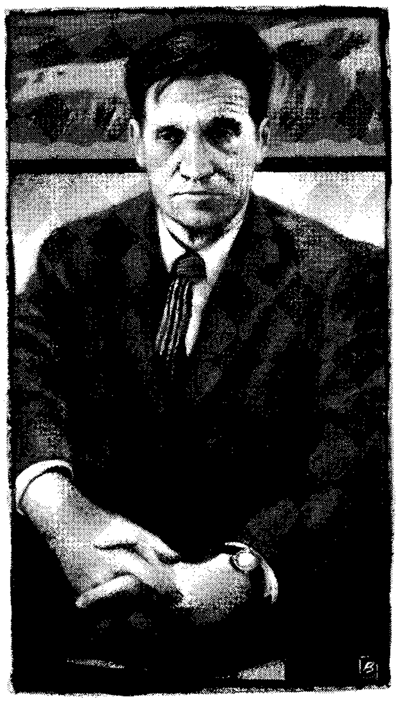
Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Sketching at Home and Abroad," more than a hundred British landscape drawings and watercolors—from the literal to the lyrical—by Turner, Constable, Wilson, Gainsborough, and others. Starts May 6. . . . ¶ Puss in Boots, the Master Cat, is the subject of three hundred years' worth of illustrations, beginning with Charles Perrault's original manuscript of Mother Goose stories. Starts May 6. . . . ¶ A show that examines, through illustrated treatises, the development of the English landscape garden. Starts May 6. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Walt Whitman and New York." The Long Island-born Brooklynite is celebrated in a show that juxtaposes prose and poetry with nineteenth-century paintings, prints, and photographs. . . . ¶ "Broadway! 125 Years of Musical Theatre." A large assortment of objects—including paintings, posters, scripts, models, sheet music, and memorabilia—from nearly seventy-five productions that have bowed on the Great White Way. First seen in New York at the I.B.M. Gallery last summer. . . . ¶ "A World Together" is a show of seventeen paintings and one installation by three Korean artists: Man Ik Lee, of Seoul; Chun Yong Oh, of Paris; and Choong Sup Lim, of New York. Through June 28. . . . ¶ An exhibition of fifty paintings, watercolors, and lithographs by the Dutch artist Adriaan Lubbers (1892-1954), whose fascination with New York City is reflected in his urban landscapes. Through July 26. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A show chronicling the design, construction, and urban context of New York's City Hall (1803-12). Forty-seven drawings, along with watercolors, prints, books, and a model, illuminate the neoclassical edifice. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—One of the more comprehensive shows in the current crop of Walt Whitman centenary celebrations is "In Life or Death Forever": a hundred and fifty manuscripts, books, photographs, and letters culled from both the Berg and Oscar Lion collections. (Berg Exhibition Room.). . . ¶ Percy Bysshe Shelley, gifted and influential Romantic poet, also made forays into the political arena, as evidenced in the letters, manuscripts, and bank checks on view in "Shelley: Unacknowledged Legislator." Through Aug. 8. (Edna Barnes Salomon Room.). . . ¶ "On the Edge" is a show of more than two hundred black-and-white and color photographs from the covers and pages of *Vogue*. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—Fifty-seven paintings, drawings, and installations by the twenty-five-year-old Russian artist Sergei Bugaev Afrika. Through June 14. . . . ¶ "Circumference," an installation of hand-blown glass objects by Robin Stanaway. Through June 14. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)



Fairfield Porter

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—A retrospective of fifty works by the painter Archibald J. Motley, Jr. Through June 7. . . . ¶ "Africa and the Diaspora" features nearly a hundred works from the museum's collection, dating from the fifth century to the present. Through June 7. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

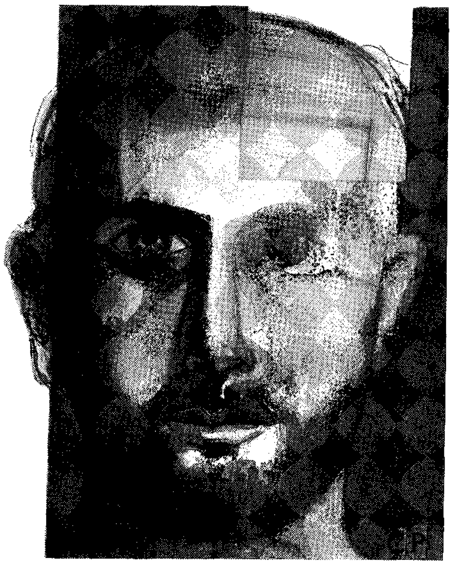
GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Short List—**georg baselitz,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through June 12), and Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through June 26); **fritz bultman,** Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St. (through May 29); **william stanley haseltine,** Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. (open Mondays, through May 30), and Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through June 5); **peter kennard,** Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through May 29); **james rosenquist,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through July 11); **david smith,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through June 27).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Richard Gerstl (1883-1908) / **Oskar Kokoschka** (1886-1980)—Gerstl's most penetrating works are his self-portraits, and there are a number of strong ones on view in this jam-packed exhibition—chiefly a haunting 1907 painting of the artist laughing and a drawing, from 1905-06, in which a diabolical and inscrutable Gerstl dissolves into a field of little oval marks (a technique that anticipates Chuck Close). After seeing these works, one is not surprised to learn that, at age twenty-five, after a failed romance with the wife of his friend Arnold Schoenberg, Gerstl stood before a mirror, put a noose around his neck, and plunged a butcher knife into his heart. Self-portraiture was only one area in which Gerstl excelled. His radically cropped landscapes, which suggest the narrow borders of a photograph, are fascinating for the anxieties they suggest, and his portraits of other people, rendered in a highly gestural style, verge on the unnerving orderliness of certain neuroses. / Kokoschka, who died at the age of ninety-three, seems indebted to the work of the tormented Gerstl. Although Kokoschka is perhaps best known for his portraits, this exhibition includes a roomful of landscape paintings in which, in contrast to Gerstl's landscapes, there are sweeping expanses, with every square inch of the canvases animated by a fearless delight in the world. They would make a gem of a show on their own. Through May 9. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)



Self-portrait by Carl Palazzolo

Short List—**pat adams,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through May 16); **robert arneson** and **luis cruz azaceta,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 29); **jared french,** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through May 29); **arthur gibbons,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 29); **sidney goodman,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 16); **robert goodnough,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 30); **shirley jaffe,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 30); **john marin,** Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St. (through May 23); **josé maría sicilia,** Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (through May 30); **philip smith,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 12); **antoni tàpies,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. (through May 29); **john wilde,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (through May 30).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Carl Andre—A very handsome show of dignified new sculptural works, whose material (Quincy granite) and titles ("Adams Shore" and "Squantum," for example) are loaded with autobiographical meaning. The over-all title for the series is "Manet Isobars," a conflation of Latin and Greek-derived English loosely translated by the artist as "it remains bars of equal weight." This suggests a connect-the-dots link between the works, like stops on a railroad, and also refers to the fact that, although differently configured, the pieces have exactly the same weight and volume. Through May 28. (Cooper, 149 Wooster St.)

Eric Bainbridge—This British artist continues to make surrealistically large-scale sculptures. But whereas in the past he wrapped them in pink or leopard-print fake fur, his current works are wrapped in beige fur, lining-side out. (On one work, however, the fur appears in a single skinny, recessed line.) The works are modelled after common objects like doorknobs and I-beams. Through May 16. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

Willie Cole—Cole has created pungently sarcastic icons of socioeconomic repression. His materials are the tools for trades that whites have historically assigned to blacks; his method is to reappropriate them in the service of African-American cultural identity. A "sampler" titled "Home Sweet Home" is made of chicken-feathered shotguns, while ironing boards leaning against a wall become war shields, the scorch marks from irons their war paint. A piece called "Random Selection" is a game of chance involving four carnival wheels. When a lever is pulled, the wheels spin around until each stops at a plaque inscribed with a non-Caucasian epithet, so that gallerygoers can randomly mix and match their own second-class citizen. Through May 16. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Carroll Dunham—This artist is one of today's celebrated younger abstract painters, and this display of his drawings oozes connoisseurship. But, at the same time, the works tend to be a little too pat and mannered. All of them have a clear relationship to Dunham's paintings, yet each series has a different character: there are black-and-white works that look like recycled Kandinsky compositions with some Twomblyesque squiggles; wax crayon ones that are self-consciously agitated and childlike; and yellow ones that trace a narrative that seems to involve mating in a stormy sea. Through May 22. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler—There's always a lengthy explanation to the work of this well-respected collaborative duo, which usually makes their output tediously dry, petrified by didacticism. Such is the case with this show of new works, titled "Anybody Can Make History." It consists of found nineteenth-century furniture—an old cupboard, a hutch, and a pie safe—variously filled with jars of colored paints, soil samples, and a honey-colored perfume meant to smell like the papers in the National Archive. On rare occasions, the duo's work has escaped its own choke hold, particularly when the artists have used it to disrupt ordinary American landscapes. Last summer, for example, the artists painted a house in Charleston in camouflage patterns. The work's bite derived not from its intricately constructed political narrative but from the sheer scale of it, and from the fact that it was situated in an undistinguished working-class black neighborhood in a city where a lynching tree and the site of a slave market are still tourist attractions. No such magic is in operation here, although an elaborate proposal for a farm silo sounds like it could do the trick. Through May 23. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

Michael Joaquín Grey—This artist's work is concerned with the formation of life and with artificial intelligence, and in general with maintaining a sense of self in the face of technology. The form of the work is often quirky; the materials are mostly plastics. Included are a blubbery, headless green baby, made of plastic and chlorophyll, lying on the floor beside an upside-down dried privet hedge; a reproduction in orange of Rodin's "Balzac," leaning backward on a very high pedestal; and a boy's bicycle, covered with drips of milky silicone, facing a group of cast milking stools. Through May 16. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Hans Haacke—Haacke is a master at showing just how loaded a politically loaded location can be. In a recent public work, for example, which is represented here by photo-and-text documentation, the artist hung, on a neoclassical façade in Munich's Königsplatz, which had been the site of Nazi rallies, banners imprinted with rosters of German companies that had sold weapons technologies to Iraq. Up for particular censure was Daimler-Benz, which was the sole subject of another public work, documentation of which is also on view. The rest of the show is an attack on President Bush. The centerpiece, an installation work titled "Eagle and Prey," consists of a darkened room of empty battered barracks lockers relieved only by an oil portrait of Bush in an eagle-capped gilt Federal frame. It is an eerie, forlorn space; the obvious reference is to Operation Desert Storm, though the work also suggests armies of the homeless, and a desiccated, haunted team spirit. It is a dramatic installation, although the payoff is not any greater than that of the several small, bitingly effective works in the entry gallery. One such work is an abandoned sofa with a pillow on it that is embroidered with a Bush quote equating opposition to capital-gains-tax cuts with Puritanism; another is a photo-op photo (with a heavy emphasis on *op*portunism) of the Bushes surveying the aftermath of a real storm in Kennebunkport, posed like the Appalachian family in a famous Depression-era photo by Walker Evans, which the artist has displayed beside it. Through May 16. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Annette Lemieux / Annette Messager—It is surprising that it took so long for someone to pair these two Annettes. While the former is American and a product of the eighties and the latter is French and a product of the seventies, there are many affinities between them, including an interest in language and in the senses. Each is a multi-media artist with a post-conceptual way of working that has been filtered through a feminine and feminist sensibility. Both artists could learn from each other—Messager might benefit from going as far afield for her references as Lemieux, while Lemieux could use some of Messager's personal outrage. Through May 9. (Baer, 476 Broome St.)

Marilyn Minter—Photo-silk-screen paintings on metal of details lifted from porn magazines, and of the occasional unmade bed or paint-daubed, lascivious tongue. According to the artist, these are "sex-positive" paintings about female desire. Two works, "Pink Singer" and "Sepia Singer," are so silly that they're kind of funny. Each depicts a woman's lipsticked open mouth with a big, knobby, microphonelike erection beside it. Through May 16. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Carl Palazzolo—John Singer Sargent's great portrait of the four Boston "Boit Sisters" is a long-standing Palazzolo theme. Evidently obsessed with this Edwardian mirage of little-girlhood, the artist always puts at least some small element of it into every one of his paintings. Here, in a show of lyrical, painterly works that ostensibly have to do with something else—landscape, for instance, or the seasons—the Boitian element may be just a tiny, vestigial, blurry triangle signifying "littlest sister on the floor." But these subliminal jolts can pry loose odd bits of emotive memory: for an instant the youngest Boit child seems to leap out of the painting into full relief. Through May 23. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

"An Exhibition for Satyajit Ray"—If you thought that the short montage of clips from Ray's films at this year's Academy Awards contained more memorable images than any of the contemporary films up for best picture, you may wish to take in this exhibition honoring the late, legendary filmmaker. None of the images here are as memorable as Ray's own, either, but this is nevertheless a highly attractive, impressionistic homage to Ray. With the exception of several book covers that Ray designed in the forties, which exhibit influences from Cocteau to Communist folk traditions; a few film posters; and a single sketchbook of storyboards, all the works are by other artists. There are drawings by Matisse, Miró, Courbet, and Tanguy and sculptures by Noguchi and the jazz musician Ornette Coleman. Work by lesser-known artists is also on display: a meditative painting in green, yellow, and orange, by Viswanadhan, which offers a fresher angle on abstraction than recent run-of-the-mill New York painting; a Brancusian sculpture by Jean-Michel Folon; and a brushy green painting by Herbert Brandl. Through May 16. (Briet, 558 Broadway.)

"Psycho"—In the late eighties, many commercial galleries picked up on a curatorial practice that sought to mock the pretentiousness of much art criticism by deliberately throwing together art works whose links were obscure. If these shows had any rationale, it was to enliven the history of the market, not to further scholarship. It would appear as if Christian Leigh, the curator of this exhibition, actually had an idea in his mind when he organized this show, though his brand of obscurantism is not especially evocative, nor is the path he proffers a sufficiently nutty or demented one. By and large, the title seems a more apt expression of artists' egos than of their work. The one exception is Chuck Close's disturbing portrait of Lucas Samaras—he really does look "psycho." Through May 9. (KunstHall, 129 Greene St. Opens at 1 Wednesdays through Saturdays.)

Short List—**ERIC BULATOV AND OLEG VASSILIEV,** Kind, 136 Greene St. (through May 30); **SHU LEA CHEANG,** Exit Art, 578 Broadway (open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 8; through May 30); **MIKE GLIER,** The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. (open Wednesday evenings until 8, through May 16); **STEPHEN MUELLER,** Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through May 30); **YOKO ONO** and **TIM ROLLINS + K.O.S.,** Boone, 417 West Broadway (through June 27); **ARCHIE RAND,** Lee, 588 Broadway (through May 23); **CHARLES RAY,** Feature, 484 Broome St. (through May 23); **SUSAN ROTHENBERG,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (through May 30); **ED RUSCHA** and **DENNIS HOPPER,** Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (through May 22); **SUE WILLIAMS,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. (through May 30).

OTHER GALLERIES

Short List—**FAIRFIELD PORTER,** Hunter College Gallery, Lexington Ave. at 68th St. (opens at 1 Mondays through Fridays, through May 22); **ELAINE REICHEK,** Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. (through May 16).

PHOTOGRAPHY

"On the Edge: Images from 100 Years of Vogue" (at the New York Public Library at 42nd Street) offers, as an exhibition, a different experience from what one gets in reading the book of the same title (published by Random House). At the show, one encounters the photographs as individual objects (of all different sizes, of varying print quality, and variously framed), many of them evocative as remnants of the time when they were made. In the book, naturally, they are presented in the format for which they were originally taken—on the printed page—and thus demonstrate the dynamics of that famous issue of form and content, even though they are now out of context. Although "On the Edge" does not consist exclusively of fashion imagery, fashion and fashionability are its dominant subjects, and there are many pieces here that could help put an end to the dismissiveness of those who think that these aspects of our century and of our culture are one-dimensional. Irwin Blumenfeld's 1945 color photograph "Red Cross," for instance, is such a complexity of symbolism, modernism, and seduction that it suggests the best of the multilayered imagery called "postmodernism" today. Blumenfeld's photo-work was a *Vogue* cover.

Helen Levitt—New York finally has a show of Levitt's work which is big enough to give viewers a true sense of this photographer's important contribution to the medium. Levitt's name has become virtually synonymous with New York street photography of the thirties and forties, though in fact she has stayed with this subject right up to the present—and here you can see both the changes and the continuity in her vision. Through June 28. (Metropolitan Museum. . . . ¶ A gallery show of Levitt's work can be seen at Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St., through May 16.)

John Pfahl—In this show, titled "Waterfalls," Pfahl takes on the tradition of American romantic landscape photography without giving in to nostalgia. His work is different from that of the many others who have claimed the mantle of such photographers as Carleton Watkins and Ansel Adams; his images seem to embrace the constructions of modern life, working them into his views of nature. With Pfahl, man-made elements are not spoilers of beauty, and by incorporating them he produces photographs that are powerfully non-escapist, as well as pleasurable. Through May 9. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

Paul Strand (1890-1976)—A hundred and thirty-four photographs spanning the artist's career, from several early New York City studies (discovered posthumously) to his final photographs, taken in Orgeval, France. Through May 17. (Whitney Museum of American Art.)

Short List—**SALLY APFELBAUM,** Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St., and Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. (through May 23); **DMITRI BALTERMANTS,** Int[illegible]national Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through June 1); **BILL JONES,** Lipton, 67 Prince St. (through May 16); **GERTRUDE KÄSEBIER,** Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (open daily except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9; through July 14); **ARNOLD NEWMAN,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. (through May 30); **NIGEL ROLFE,** Baum, 588 Broadway (through May 23); **CINDY SHERMAN,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through May 9), and Horan, 35 E. 67th St. (open Mondays, through June 12); **TONY TASSET,** Feature, 484 Broome St. (through May 23); **GEORGE TICE,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through May 23); **JEFF WALL,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 16).

MUSIC

James Levine is approaching the time of life when others of the century's great opera conductors have typically sought to expand their symphonic horizons. Not that his career hasn't from the beginning included plenty of orchestral work (too much too soon, some critics said of his copious recordings in the seventies). But now, rather than taking the helm of a single world-ranked orchestra, he has been putting together a network of projects and associations for what will presumably be a broad midlife survey of his repertoire, in both concerts and recordings. The component of greatest local interest in this is the emergence of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra from the pit to the stage. The May 5 and May 9 concerts at Carnegie Hall offer Mahler ("Wunderhorn" songs, with Thomas Hampson; "Das Lied von der Erde," with Christa Ludwig and Michael Sylvester), Mozart (the early A-Major Piano Concerto), and Mussorgsky ("Pictures at an Exhibition"). We like these programs for these reasons: Mr. Levine is often inspired when he accompanies Miss Ludwig; playing Mozart on the piano is one of the things he does best, and we've always wished he would play the concertos; an opera orchestra should by rights shine in the theatrical Mussorgsky cycle (to be played, we're glad to see, in the classic Ravel orchestration and not as a superfluous essay in doing it differently).

We don't expect to mistake the orchestra for the Vienna Philharmonic or the Chicago Symphony: splendid ensemble that its members are, they have not played the symphonic classics together hundreds of times, season after season. The demands are different, and perhaps this will show. What we do expect to hear is the opening of a new chapter in the history of an orchestra whose recent history has already been exciting.

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

OPERA

Comedian Harmonists—In the waning days of the Weimar Republic, the Comedian Harmonists—a slick, witty, and vocally superb male sextet—achieved celebrity singing lighthearted popular songs as well as material that might be construed to be politically adventurous. Hitler was not among their fans, and banned first the group and then their repertoire, which the Nazis found to be "degenerate" and insufficiently virile to support the war effort. "In the Time of the Comedian Harmonists" is a new musical-theatre work in which a modern reincarnation of the group shares the stage with shadow puppets and film projections. The musical selections range from "Tea for Two" and "Quand Il Pleut" (the French version of "Stormy Weather") to the immortal rib-tickler "Der Onkel Bumba aus Calumba tanzt nur Rumba." (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. May 7-9 at 8.)

Purcell's "The Fairy Queen"—William Christie directs Les Arts Florissants in concert performances of Purcell's spin on Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (Alice Tully Hall. May 7 and May 10 at 8.)

L'Opéra Français de New York—Presenting two operas by Milhaud: "Le Pauvre Matelot" (a surrealistic tale of love and murder, to a libretto by Cocteau) and "Esther de Carpentras" (an updating of the Purim story, transposed to the south of France). Fully staged, with Yves Abel conducting. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. May 8-9 at 8.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting Mozart's "The Magic Flute" (in English). (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. May 9 at 7:30 and May 10 at 2:30.)

"Atlas"—The New York première of an opera by Meredith Monk, loosely derived from the biography of Alexandra David-Neel, who was the first Western woman to explore Tibet. With stage direction by Ms. Monk, and with Wayne Hankin conducting the company's ten instrumentalists and eighteen singers and actors. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. May 13 at 7. Through May 17.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Kurt Masur conducting. May 5 at 8: Dukas's "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 5, and Barber's Cello Concerto, featuring Lorne Munroe, the orchestra's principal cellist. . . . ¶ May 7 and May 9 at 8, May 8 at 11 A.M., and May 12 at 7:30: Mozart's last three symphonies, written in a fruitful span of two months in the summer of 1788. . . . NOTE: On May 9 at 7, members of the orchestra will perform Mozart's G-Minor String Quintet, in a pre-concert recital open to ticket-holders.

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra—At Carnegie Hall, James Levine conducting: May 5 at 8: Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" (in Ravel's arrangement) and Mahler's "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" songs (featuring baritone Thomas Hampson). . . . ¶ May 9 at 8: Mozart's A-Major Piano Concerto (K. 414, with Mr. Levine doubling as soloist), and Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde" (featuring mezzo-soprano Christa Ludwig and tenor Michael Sylvester).

Orpheus—Soprano Benita Valente and classical guitarist Pepe Romero join the chamber orchestra in music by the nonagenarian Spanish composer Joaquín Rodrigo (supplementing orchestral works by Arriaga and Turina). (Carnegie Hall. May 6 at 8.)

St. Ignatius Loyola Choir and Orchestra—Kent Tritle directs Bach's Magnificat, Handel's "Utrecht Te Deum," and Vaughan Williams' "Five Mystical Songs" (featuring Charles Robert Stephens). (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 439-8044. May 6 at 8.)

"Music from SummerFest"—Robert Kapilow conducts the Festival Orchestra in Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto (featuring pianist Ilana Vered) and coeval compositions by Beethoven, Cherubini, and Joseph Wölffl. (92nd Street Y. May 6 at 8.)

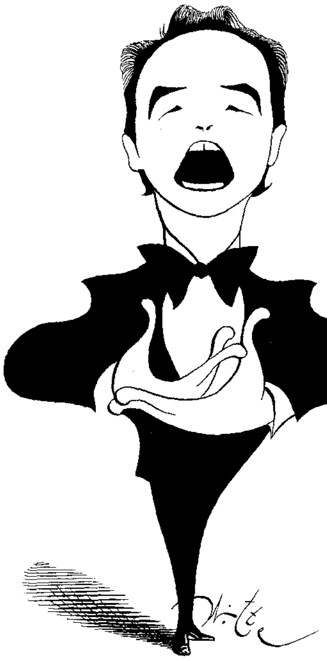
Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost conducts music by Vivaldi and others. (Alice Tully Hall. May 6 at 8.)

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra—To celebrate Brahms' one hundred and fifty-ninth birthday (to the day), Richard Auldon Clark leads the composer's Symphony No. 1, as part of a midday concert series that for the past seventeen years has been supported largely by an anonymous grant dedicated (as the check-writer puts it) "to the glory of God and in honor of Johannes Brahms." (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. May 7 at noon. Admission by contribution.)

Oratorio Society of New York—Lyndon Woodside directs Handel's oratorio "Israel in Egypt" (which was originally supposed to be titled "Exodus"), with sopranos Michelle Boucher and Elizabeth Pruett, countertenor Brian Asawa, tenor Alan Bennett, baritone William Parker, and bass John Trout. (Carnegie Hall. May 8 at 8.)

London Symphony Orchestra—At Avery Fisher Hall, Michael Tilson Thomas conducting. May 10 at 3: The orchestral suite from Bernstein's "A Quiet Place," an amalgam of the suites from Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet," and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 (with Vladimir Feltsman). . . . ¶ May 13 at 8: Mahler's Symphony No. 9.

Canterbury Choral Society—Charles Dodsley Walker directs the choir, orchestra, and soloists in Bach's "Saint Matthew Passion." (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. May 10 at 4. Admission by contribution.)



José Carreras

RECITALS

Speculum Musicae—Presenting chamber works by Sándor Jemnitz, Hans Abrahamsen, Ralph Shapey, and David Sanford (a première). (Merkin Concert Hall. May 5 at 8.)

Four Nations Ensemble—In old Leipzig, when Bach and the boys stepped out for a swig of the good stuff, they sometimes made their way to Gottfried Zimmermann's Coffee House, where quodlibets and trio sonatas flowed as liberally as the potables. The town's Collegium Musicum played there every Friday (at "happy hour" in the summer, in the evening in winter), and added extra performances when conventions were in town. Numerous instrumentalists join the period-instrument Four Nations Ensemble to re-create such a musical evening (though on a Wednesday, and without refreshments), performing works by Bach, his predecessors Buxtehude and Georg Muffat, and one of his students, Johann Müthel. (Friends Meeting House, 221 E. 15th St. May 6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-718 622-3695.)

Karen Kushner—Pianist, performing transcriptions from Bach, Beethoven's F-Major Sonata (Op. 10, No. 2), Brahms' seven Fantasias (Op. 116), works by Chopin and Szymanowski, and the première of a ballade by Kevin Oldham. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. May 6 at 8.)

Christopher Vassiliades—Performing piano works by Meyer Kupferman. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 6 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Presenting Dvořák's String Quartet No. 13 (Op. 106) and Beethoven's String Quartet No. 12 (Op. 127). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 7 at 7:30 and May 10 at 4.)

Misha Dichter—The pianist will perform Beethoven's Six Bagatelles (Op. 126), Schubert's A-Major Sonata (D. 959), and Brahms' Waltzes (Op. 39) and "Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel." (Carnegie Hall. May 7 at 8.)

Robert White and Stephen Hough—The tenor and the pianist will collaborate in a program that includes Romantic piano music (by Chopin and Paderewski) as well as Irish ballads, German lieder, and songs of the Edwardian era and the First World War. (Weill Recital Hall. May 7 at 8.)

Vinland Ensemble—Soprano Margaret Astrup, oboist Virginia Brewer, and pianist Mary Ann Brown perform Scandinavian and American works, including the première of Jerrold Morgulas's "Nightsongs from Mantova." (Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, 263 W. 86th St., at West End Ave. May 7 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Robert Ashley—An assortment of the composer's works. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 7 at 8.)

Joshua Bell and Nai-Yuan Hu—Mr. Bell plays Prokofiev's D-Major Violin Sonata (Op. 94), Mr. Hu plays Strauss's Violin Sonata (Op. 18),

MUSIC–Cont'd

and both violinists collaborate in chamber music by Louis Spohr and Moritz Moszkowski; assisted by pianist Wu Han. (Taipei Theatre, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 48th St. 373-1850. May 8-9 at 7:30.)

Krystian Zimerman—The pianist will perform Brahms' Four Ballades (Op. 10), Szymanowski's "Masques," and Chopin's Four Scherzi. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 8 at 8.)

Alaria Chamber Ensemble—Oboist Ronald Roseman joins the group to perform Saint-Saëns' Oboe Sonata and Martinů's rarely played Oboe Quartet (from 1947); the concert also includes works by Telemann, Brahms, and Edmund Rubbra. (Weill Recital Hall. May 8 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Performing music for piano and strings by Mendelssohn (his C-Minor Trio) and Turina, as well as a string duo and a quintet by Mozart. (Alice Tully Hall. May 8 at 8 and May 10 at 5.)

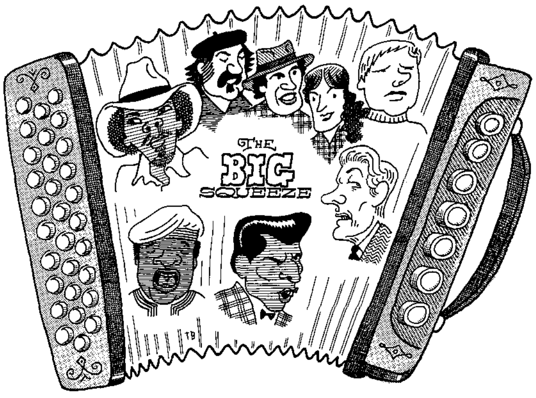
Kyoko Takezawa and Akira Eguchi—The violinist and the pianist perform a program redolent of Gallic: sonatas by Debussy, Ravel, and Saint-Saëns, as well as Sarasate's "Carmen Fantasy." (92nd Street Y. May 9 at 8. . . . **note:** This concert replaces the recital by Young Uck Kim originally scheduled for this date.)

Guarneri Quartet—Performing quartets by Arriaga, Tchaikovsky, and Ned Rorem (his Third). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 9 at 8.)

Joseph Smith—Pianist, performing sonatas by Mendelssohn and Brahms (in F Minor), as well as short works by Stephen Foster, Gottschalk, Griffes, and Percy Grainger. (Alice Tully Hall. May 9 at 8.)

Gerald Ranck—The harpsichordist inaugurates a three-year project in which he will play all of Domenico Scarlatti's approximately five hundred and fifty keyboard sonatas. In this first installment, he performs the thirty sonatas (K. 1-30) from the composer's "Essercizi per Gravicembalo," published in 1738. (Scarlatti's "K-numbers," by the way, refer to a roughly chronological catalogue compiled by the late Ralph Kirkpatrick, and have no connection to the more frequently encountered "K-numbers" assigned by Ludwig Köchel to the works of Mozart.) (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 874-5210. May 10 at 3.)

Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music—Presenting works by William Thomas McKinley, Weber, and Dvořák (his F-Minor Piano Trio). (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. May 10 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)



"The Big Squeeze"

Daniel Stepner and John Gibbons—The violinist and the fortepianist perform Mozart sonatas on period instruments. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. May 10 at 5.)

Partita—Performing chamber works by Mozart, Martinů, and Villa-Lobos, in addition to a new work by Francis Thorne. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 11 at 8.)

Chamber Players of the League/ISCM—Performing works by six contemporary composers, as well as a bit of Copland. (Weill Recital Hall. May 11 at 8.)

"Bang on a Can Festival"—At the Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Opening performances of the week-long festival of the new or unusual. May 12 at 5:30: Pianist Margaret Leng Tan and singer Joan La Barbara perform John Cage's "Four Walls," written in 1944. . . . ¶ May 12 at 8: The Goldberg Ensemble, an English string orchestra, performs works by Louis Andriessen, Henryk Górecki, David Lang, Arvo Pärt, and Janet Owen Thomas. . . . ¶ May 12 at 11: Morton Feldman's "Three Voices," featuring Ms. La Barbara. . . . ¶ May 13 at 5:30: Robert Black plays avant-garde works for the double-bass. . . . ¶ May 13 at 8: The Fred Frith Guitar Quartet, Kazue Sawai Koto Ensemble, and Your Neighborhood Saxophone Quartet. (Through May 17. For information about tickets to all concerts, call 459-4852.)

José Carreras—The tenor will sing music by Tosti, Verdi, Massenet, Puccini, and others; with pianist Lorenzo Bavaj. (Carnegie Hall. May 12 at 8.)

VineyardMusicke—Baroque guitarist Patrick O'Brien joins the period-instrument chamber group in a concert of music from colonial Mexico. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. May 12 at 8.)

Margaret Ahrens—The soprano sings a more than usually varied program of art songs, ranging from Schütz to Chabrier, with further excursions into Strauss, Rachmaninoff, and Paul Alan Levi, who will assist at the piano. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 12 at 8.)

Chamber Music at the Y—Violinist Jaime Laredo and pianist Emanuel Ax perform Debussy's Violin Sonata, and colleagues assist in Fauré's G-Minor Piano Quartet and Brahms' Piano Quintet. (92nd Street Y. May 12-13 at 8.)

Seth Carlin—The fortepianist performs two of Schubert's luxurious late sonatas: the A Major (D. 959) and the B-Flat Major (D. 960). (Merkin Concert Hall. May 13 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Soundgarden—An infernally loud band, the mighty Soundgarden has gained considerable commercial clout with their latest release, "Badmotorfinger." These Seattle rockers, like the incomparable Pearl Jam, have honed a sound—grinding guitars and tough vocals—that is a choice alternative to the stale, aluminum rock of bands like Tesla. The union of punk and late-seventies art rock is what Soundgarden is after, and with their psychodramatic lyrics and speedy guitar breaks they create a brutal and strangely alienated American soundtrack for the nineties. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. May 9 at 8.)

"Highlights in Jazz"—Steve Allen, Jay Leonhart, Tony Monte, and Bobby Rosengarden. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. May 7 at 8.)

Eric Clapton—Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. May 8 at 8.

Casselberry-DuPreé—P.S. 41, 116 W. 11th St. May 8 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

WCBS-FM Twentieth-Anniversary Concert—With Darlene Love, Ronnie Spector, Lou Christie, the Dixie Cups, and others. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 8-9 at 8.)

Lavender Light Gospel Choir—Friends Meeting House, 221 E. 15th St. May 9 at 7. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Brave New World—A klezmer ensemble. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. 873-3400. May 9 at 7:30.)

Mother's Day Caribbean Concerts—The Mighty Sparrow, Lord Kitchener, and others. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. May 9 at 8 and May 10 at 4.)

Bob Dorough, Meredith D'Ambrosio, and Eddie Higgins—Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. May 10 at 8:30.

Preservation Hall Jazz Band—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 13 at 8.

Shelley Hirsch—Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway. May 13 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the performance.

Spin Doctors—Academy Theatre, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. May 13 at 8.

"The Big Squeeze"—The first two of three concerts in an accordion festival. May 8: The Lawtell Playboys, José Quesada y los Cinco Diablos, Tom and Maureen Doherty, and Guy Klucevsek & Ain't Nothin' But a Polka Band. . . . ¶ May 9: Savoy-Doucet Band, I. K. Dairo, Los Macondos, Art Moilanen, and Pauline Oliveros. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Concerts at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the Seattle Mariners, May 12-13 at 7:30.

Mets—Vs. the Los Angeles Dodgers, May 8 at 7:40 and May 9-10 at 1:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the San Diego Padres, May 11-13 at 7:40.

CHAMPIONSHIPS—HOCKEY AND BASKETBALL

Rangers vs. Devils—At press time, Game 7 was about to begin. Who will be victorious? Messier's mob or Lemieux's lugs? By now, you know. The winner faces either the Washington Capitals or the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Knicks—If the Knicks win their series against the Detroit Pistons, they'll face the Chicago Bulls in second-round action.

(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; the Rangers and the Knicks at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. Starts May 6. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . At Saratoga Raceway, Saratoga Springs: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:45.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Plant Sales—At the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza: trees, herbs, vegetables, cacti, orchids, geraniums, and other varieties of growing things. (May 6, from 9 to 7, and May 7, from 9 to 3.). . . ¶ At the New York Botanical Garden, the Bronx: tropicals, begonias, ferns, and shrubs, as well as some of the aforementioned plants. (May 8-9, from 10 to 4.)

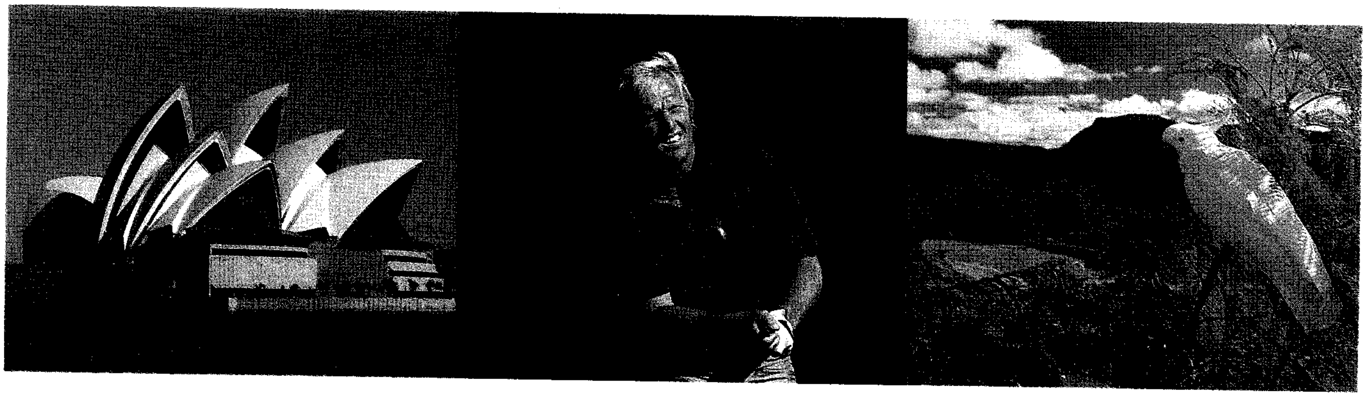
Talks—May 7 at 6: The New York City Audubon Society presents a lecture called "Cranes and People: A Struggle for Coexistence." (Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 12 at 7: Wynton Marsalis and Albert Murray talk about jazz. (Alice Tully Hall. For information about tickets, call 875-5440.)

Readings—May 6 at 7: Jorie Graham, Richard Howard, Donald Justice, and Mark Strand, in a tribute to Wallace Stevens. (Poetry Society of America, National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ May 7 at 7: Eavan Boland reads from the poetry of Sylvia Plath. (Poet's House, 72 Spring St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ May 8 at 7: Eavan Boland reads from her own poetry. (Nicholas Roerich Museum, 319 W. 107th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 11 at 7: Alice McDermott reads from her new novel. (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 11 at 8: Simon Ortiz, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Luci Tapahonso read from their own works. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.). . . ¶ May 11 at 8: Blair Brown, Byron Jennings, and John Slattery read Paul Muldoon's "Madoc." Mr. Muldoon will introduce. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. For information about tickets, call 645-0905.). . . ¶ May 11 at 8: Amiri Baraka and Juan Felipe Herrera read from their own works. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ May 13 at 6:30: Annie Dillard reads from her new novel. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. 873-3400.)

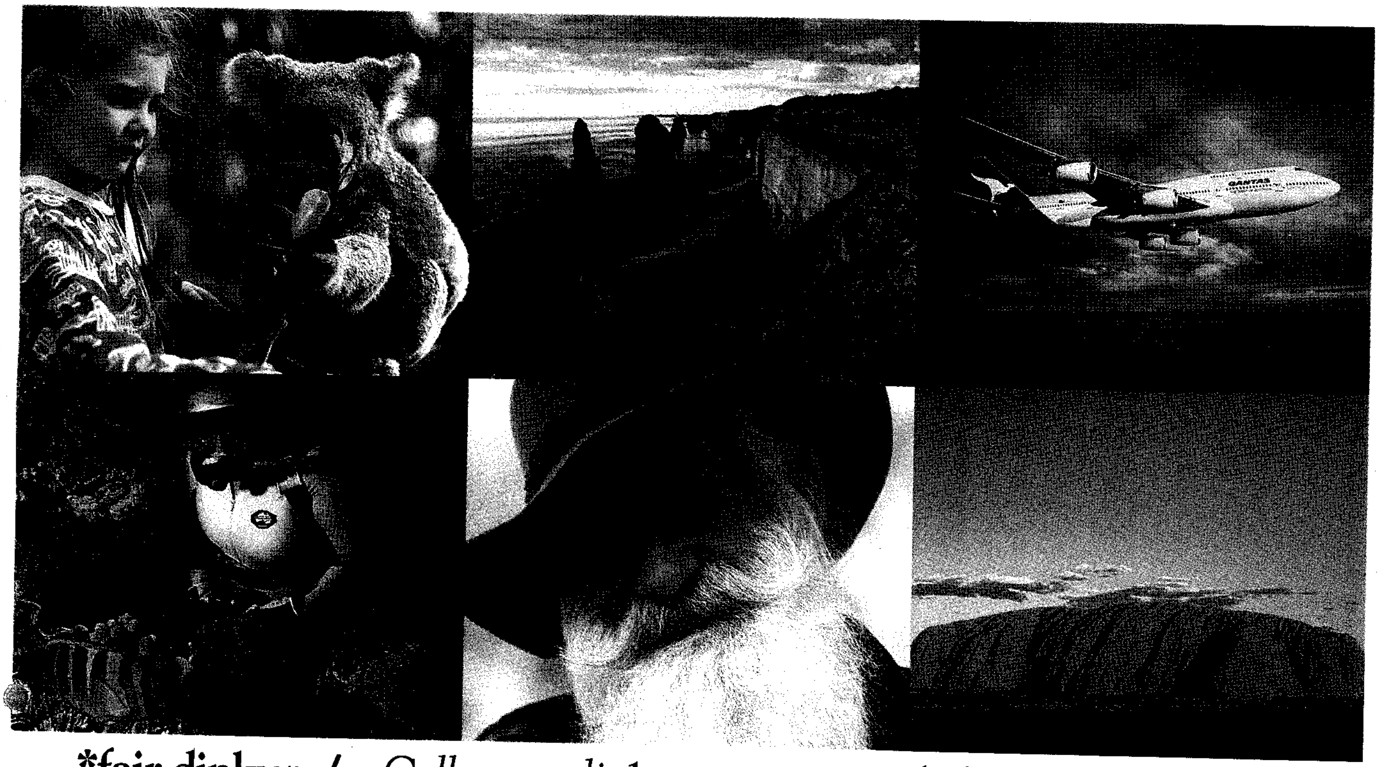
Walks—May 10 at noon: A tour of Millionaire's Mile, the stretch of Fifth Ave. between 59th and 79th Sts. Sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring. For reservations, call 265-2663. . . . ¶ May 10 at 1: A tour of the Lower East Side, sponsored by Citywalks. For more information, call 989-2456.

Benefit—An evening of short radio plays by Rachel Cline, Howard Korder, David Mamet, Madeleine Olnek, and others performed live by such actors as Griffin Dunne, Helen Hunt, and Elizabeth McGovern. (Laura Belle, 120 W. 43rd St. May 11 at 7. For information about tickets, call 645-8015.)

Memorandum—Remember your mother on Mother's Day, May 10.



Fair Dinkum* Australia.



***fair dinkum/** – *Colloq.* – *adj.* 1: true, genuine, dinkum ‹are you fair dinkum?› – *interj.* 2: assertion of truth or genuineness ‹it's true, mate, fair dinkum› 3: Come have a fair dinkum great time in Australia.

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

Australia
Come and say G'day.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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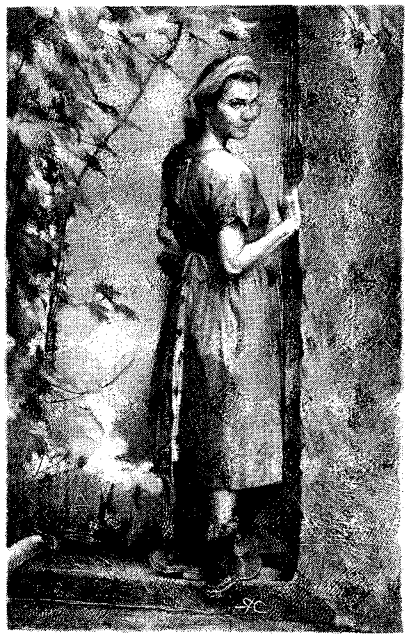
FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 22.



At the Gramercy and Cinema II, Robin Wright in "The Playboys"

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: Through May 12: "Edward II" (directed by Derek Jarman). From May 13: "The Waterdance" (Neal Jimenez and Michael Steinberg), with Eric Stoltz, Wesley Snipes, William Forsythe, Helen Hunt, and Elizabeth Peña,
Theatre 2: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).
Theatre 3: "Mississippi Masala" (†).
Theatre 4: "Highway 61" (Bruce McDonald).
Theatre 5: "Night on Earth" (Jim Jarmusch).
Theatre 6: "Proof" (Jocelyn Moorhouse).

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
May 4: Theatre closed.
May 5-7: "Two English Girls" (1972, François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud.
May 8-10: "Shoot the Piano Player" (1960, François Truffaut; in French), with Charles Aznavour; and "Day for Night" (†).
May 11: Theatre closed.
From May 12: "Stolen Kisses" (1968, François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud; and "Bed and Board" (1970, Truffaut; in French), with Léaud and Claude Jade.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "White Sands" (Roger Donaldson), with Willem Dafoe, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Mickey Rourke.
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: Through May 7: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze. From May 8: "Poison Ivy" (Katt Shea Ruben), with Tom Skerritt, Sara Gilbert, Cheryl Ladd, and Drew Barrymore.
Theatre 2: "Wayne's World" (Penelope Spheeris), with Mike Myers and Dana Carvey.
Theatre 3: Through May 7: "K2" (Franc Roddam), with Michael Biehn, Matt Craven, and Raymond J. Barry. From May 8: "The 1992 Human Rights Watch Film Festival."
Theatre 4: Through May 7: "The Linguini Incident" (Richard Shepard), with Rosanna Arquette and David Bowie. From May 8: "The 1992 Human Rights Watch Film Festival."
Theatre 5: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 6: "Deep Cover" (†).
Theatre 7: Through May 7: "Shadows and Fog" (Woody Allen). From May 8: "Incident at Oglala" (Michael Apted), a documentary.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: Through May 5: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris). From May 6: "Toto le Heros" (Jaco Van Dormael; in French), with Michel Bouquet.
Theatre 2: "Othello" (1952, Orson Welles), with Welles.
Theatre 3: "Daughters of the Dust" (1991, Julie Dash).
Theatre 4: Through May 7: "Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins. From May 8: "The Favor, the Watch, and the Very Big Fish" (Ben Lewin), with Bob Hoskins, Jeff Goldblum, Natasha Richardson, and Michel Blanc.
Theatre 5: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish).
Theatre 6: Through May 5: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and (evenings only) "The Hours and Times" (Christopher Münch). From May 6: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and (evenings only) "Sleepwalkers."
Theatre 7: "Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, and Peter Lorre.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 2: "Year of the Comet" (Peter Yates), with Penelope Ann Miller, Tim Daly, and Louis Jourdan.
Theatre 3: "White Sands" (Roger Donaldson), with Willem Dafoe, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Mickey Rourke.
Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Mambo Kings" (Arne Glimcher), with Armand Assante, Antonio Banderas, and Cathy Moriarty.
Theatre 6: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Playboys" (Gillies Mackinnon), with Aidan Quinn, Robin Wright, and Albert Finney.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through May 7: "The Babe" (†).
From May 8: "Wild Orchid 2: Two Shades of Blue" (Zalman King).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Beethoven" (†).
Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 3: Through May 7: "Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins. From May 8: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 4: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Year of the Comet" (Peter Yates), with Penelope Ann Miller, Tim Daly, and Louis Jourdan.
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 3: "K2" (Franc Roddam), with Michael Biehn, Matt Craven, and Raymond J. Barry.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"My Cousin Vinny" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"JFK" (†).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: Through May 7: "Who Shot Patakango?" (Robert Brooks). From May 8: "Incident at Oglala" (Michael Apted), a documentary.
Theatre 2: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Crown Gotham, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"My Cousin Vinny" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"A Midnight Clear" (Keith Gordon), with Peter Berg, Kevin Dillon, Arye Gross, Ethan Hawke, Gary Sinise, and Frank Whaley.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.
Theatre 2: "Deep Cover" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through May 7: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
From May 8: "Wild Orchid 2: Two Shades of Blue" (Zalman King).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through May 7: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze. From May 8: "Poison Ivy" (Katt Shea Ruben), with Tom Skerritt, Sara Gilbert, Cheryl Ladd, and Drew Barrymore.
Theatre 2: "The Babe" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins.
Theatre 2: "The Playboys" (Gillies Mackinnon), with Aidan Quinn, Robin Wright, and Albert Finney.
Theatre 3: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, in Spanish).

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)
"Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Beethoven" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 7: (Matinées only) "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film; and (evenings only) "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly. From May 8: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 3: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 4: "Folks!" (Ted Kotcheff), with Tom Selleck, Don Ameche, and Anne Jackson.
Theatre 5: "Leaving Normal" (Edward Zwick), with Christine Lahti and Meg Tilly.
Theatre 6: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "White Sands" (Roger Donaldson), with Willem Dafoe, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Mickey Rourke.
Theatre 2: "Basic Instinct" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Player" (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Linguini Incident" (Richard Shepard), with Rosanna Arquette and David Bowie.
Theatre 2: "Year of the Comet" (Peter Yates), with Penelope Ann Miller, Tim Daly, and Louis Jourdan.

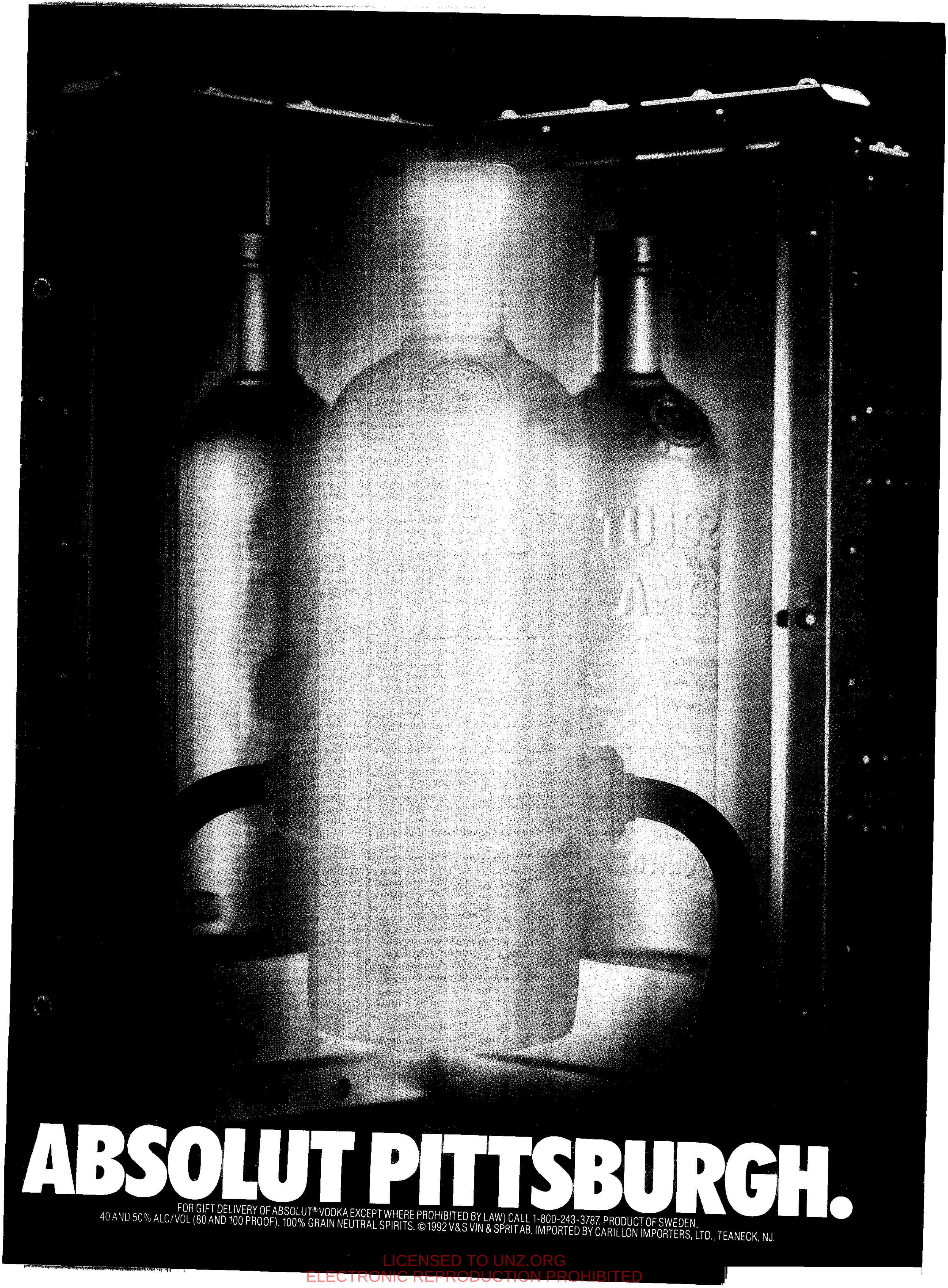
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"K2" (Franc Roddam), with Michael Biehn, Matt Craven, and Raymond J. Barry.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 7: "The Babe" (†). From May 8: "Wild Orchid 2: Two Shades of Blue" (Zalman King).

Loews Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-240
Theatre 1: "Year of the Comet" (Peter Yates), with Penelope Ann Miller, Tim Daly, and Louis Jourdan.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film; and (evenings only) "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly.
Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).
Theatre 4: "White Sands" (Roger Donaldson), with Willem Dafoe, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Mickey Rourke.
Theatre 5: Through May 7: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze. From May 8: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 6: "Thunderheart" (†).
Theatre 7: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris).



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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: "Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins.

Theatre 2: "Deep Cover" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Theatre 1: Through May 5: "Iron Man" (1989, directed by Shinya Tsukamoto; in Japanese). From May 6: "Caroline Leaf: An Animated Life."

Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.

Theatre 3: Through May 7: "Blow-Up" (1966, Michelangelo Antonioni), with Vanessa Redgrave and David Hemmings. From May 8: "Broadway Bill" (1934, Frank Capra), with Myrna Loy, Warner Baxter, Walter Connolly, and Helen Vinson.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: Through May 7: "Year of the Comet" (Peter Yates), with Penelope Ann Miller, Tim Daly, and Louis Jourdan. From May 8: "Wild Orchid 2: Two Shades of Blue" (Zalman King).

Theatre 2: "Folks!" (Ted Kotcheff), with Tom Selleck, Don Ameche, and Anne Jackson.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "The Player" (†).

Theatre 2: Through May 7: "White Men Can't Jump" (†). From May 8: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: "A Midnight Clear" (Keith Gordon), with Peter Berg, Kevin Dillon, Arye Gross, Ethan Hawke, Gary Sinise, and Frank Whaley.

Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).

Theatre 3: "Just Like in the Movies."

Theatre 4: (Separate admissions) "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French and Polish); and "American Dream" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris).

Theatre 2: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).

Theatre 3: "City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze.

Theatre 4: "Leaving Normal" (Edward Zwick), with Christine Lahti and Meg Tilly.

Theatre 5: Through May 7: "Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins. From May 8: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.

Theatre 6: "Deep Cover" (†).

Theatre 7: (Matinées only) "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film; and (evenings only) "The Player" (†).

Theatre 8: "The Player" (†).

Theatre 9: "Folks!" (Ted Kotcheff), with Tom Selleck, Don Ameche, and Anne Jackson.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "K2" (Franc Roddam), with Michael Biehn, Matt Craven, and Raymond J. Barry.

Theatre 2: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Theatre 3: (Matinées only) "Beethoven" (†); and (evenings only) "The Babe" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"K2" (Franc Roddam), with Michael Biehn, Matt Craven, and Raymond J. Barry.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "The Cutting Edge" (Paul M. Glaser), with D. B. Sweeney and Moira Kelly.

Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "FernGully . . . The Last Rainforest" (Bill Kroyer), an animated film; and (evenings only) "JFK" (†).

Theatre 3: "Beethoven" (†).

Theatre 4: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (Jon Avnet).

Theatre 5: Through May 7: (Matinées only) "Rock-A-Doodle" (Don Bluth), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Edward II" (Derek Jarman). From May 8: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.

Theatre 6: "The Babe" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"City of Joy" (Roland Joffé), with Patrick Swayze, Pauline Collins, and Om Puri.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, and Peter Lorre.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"A Woman's Tale" (Paul Cox), with Sheila Florance.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "Mississippi Masala" (†).

Theatre 2: Through May 7: "Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge), with Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis, and Rupert Graves. From May 8: "The Favor, the Watch, and the Very Big Fish" (Ben Lewin), with Bob Hoskins, Jeff Goldblum, Natasha Richardson, and Michel Blanc.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

"Howards End" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"The Mambo Kings" (Arne Glimcher), with Armand Assante, Antonio Banderas, and Cathy Moriarty.

Loews Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

Through May 7: "The Player" (†).

From May 8: "The 1992 Human Rights Watch Film Festival."

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Night on Earth" (Jim Jarmusch).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).

Theatre 2: Through May 7: "Toto le Heros" (Jaco Van Dormael; in French). From May 8: "Adam's Rib" (Viatcheslav Krishtofovitch; in Russian).

Theatre 3: "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Leaving Normal" (Edward Zwick), with Christine Lahti and Meg Tilly.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "White Sands" (Roger Donaldson), with Willem Dafoe, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Mickey Rourke.

Theatre 2: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan.

Theatre 3: "Basic Instinct" (†).

Theatre 4: "Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins.

Theatre 5: "The Linguini Incident" (Richard Shepard), with Rosanna Arquette and David Bowie.

Theatre 6: "K2" (Franc Roddam), with Michael Biehn, Matt Craven, and Raymond J. Barry.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: Through May 7: "My Cousin Vinny" (†). From May 8: "Crisscross" (Chris Menges), with Goldie Hawn.

Theatre 2: Through May 7: "Year of the Comet" (Peter Yates), with Penelope Ann Miller, Tim Daly, and Louis Jourdan. From May 8: "Poison Ivy" (Katt Shea Ruben), with Tom Skerritt, Sara Gilbert, Cheryl Ladd, and Drew Barrymore.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Beethoven" (†); and (evenings only) "Deep Cover" (†).

Theatre 2: "Folks!" (Ted Kotcheff), with Tom Selleck, Don Ameche, and Anne Jackson.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (†).

Theatre 2: "White Sands" (directed by Roger Donaldson), with Willem Dafoe, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Mickey Rourke.

Theatre 3: "Deep Cover" (†).

Theatre 4: "Basic Instinct" (†).

Theatre 5: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Theatre 6: "Folks!" (Ted Kotcheff), with Tom Selleck, Don Ameche, and Anne Jackson.

Theatre 7: "White Men Can't Jump" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Passed Away" (Charlie Peters), with Bob Hoskins.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Year of the Comet" (Peter Yates), with Penelope Ann Miller, Tim Daly, and Louis Jourdan; and (evenings only) "Wayne's World" (Penelope Spheeris), with Mike Myers, Dana Carvey, and Rob Lowe.

Theatre 3: "The Linguini Incident" (Richard Shepard), with Rosanna Arquette and David Bowie.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Sleepwalkers" (Mick Garris).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: Through May 7: "Split Second" (Tony Maylan), with Rutger Hauer, Kim Cattrall, and Neil Duncan. From May 8: "Wild Orchid 2: Two Shades of Blue" (Zalman King).

Theatre 2: "Thunderheart" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Le Cinematographe, 15 Vandam St. (675-4680)

Through May 7: "Window Shopping" (1992, directed by Chantal Akerman; in French).

From May 8: "Women Make Movies 20th Anniversary Film Tour."

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

"Raspad" (Mikhail Belikov, in Russian).

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Through May 7: "Broadway Bill" (1934, Frank Capra), with Myrna Loy, Warner Baxter, Walter Connolly, and Helen Vinson.

May 8-10: "Lady for a Day" (1933, Frank Capra), with Warren William, May Robson, Guy Kibbee, Ned Sparks, and Walter Connolly; and "American Madness" (see page 23).

May 11-12: "The Strong Man" (†); and "Rain or Shine" (1930, Frank Capra), with Joe Cook, Louise Fazenda, and Joan Peers.

May 13: "Dirigible" (1931, Frank Capra), with Jack Holt, Ralph Graves, Fay Wray, Hobert Bosworth, Clarence Muse, and Roscoe Karns; and "Submarine" (1928, Capra), with Holt, Graves, Dorothy Revier, Clarence Burton, and Arthur Rankin.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

May 4: "La Femme Infidèle" (1969, Claude Chabrol; in French), with Stéphane Audran, Michel Bouquet, Michel Duchaussoy, and Maurice Ronet; and "This Man Must Die" (1969, Chabrol; in French), with Duchaussoy and Jean Yanne.

May 5: "The Blue Gardenia" (1953, Fritz Lang), with Anne Baxter, Richard Conte, and Ann Sothern; and "The Woman in the Window" (1944, Fritz Lang), with Edward G. Robinson, Joan Bennett, Dan Duryea, and Raymond Massey.

May 6: "Lost Horizon" (1937, Frank Capra), with Ronald Colman, Margo, Sam Jaffe, and Edward Everett Horton; and "The Bitter Tea of General Yen" (1933, Capra), with Barbara Stanwyck, Nils Asther, Gavin Gordon, Walter Connolly, Toshia Mori, and Richard Loo.

May 7: "Movie Movie" (†) and "Two for the Road" (†).

May 8-9: "Stage Fright" (1950, Alfred Hitchcock), with Jane Wyman, Marlene Dietrich, Richard Todd, and Michael Wilding; and "Strangers on a Train" (1951, Hitchcock), with Farley Granger, Robert Walker, and Ruth Roman.

May 10: "A Clockwork Orange" (1971, Stanley Kubrick), with Malcolm McDowell, Patrick Magee, and Adrienne Corri; and "Brazil" (1985, Terry Gilliam), with Jonathan Pryce.

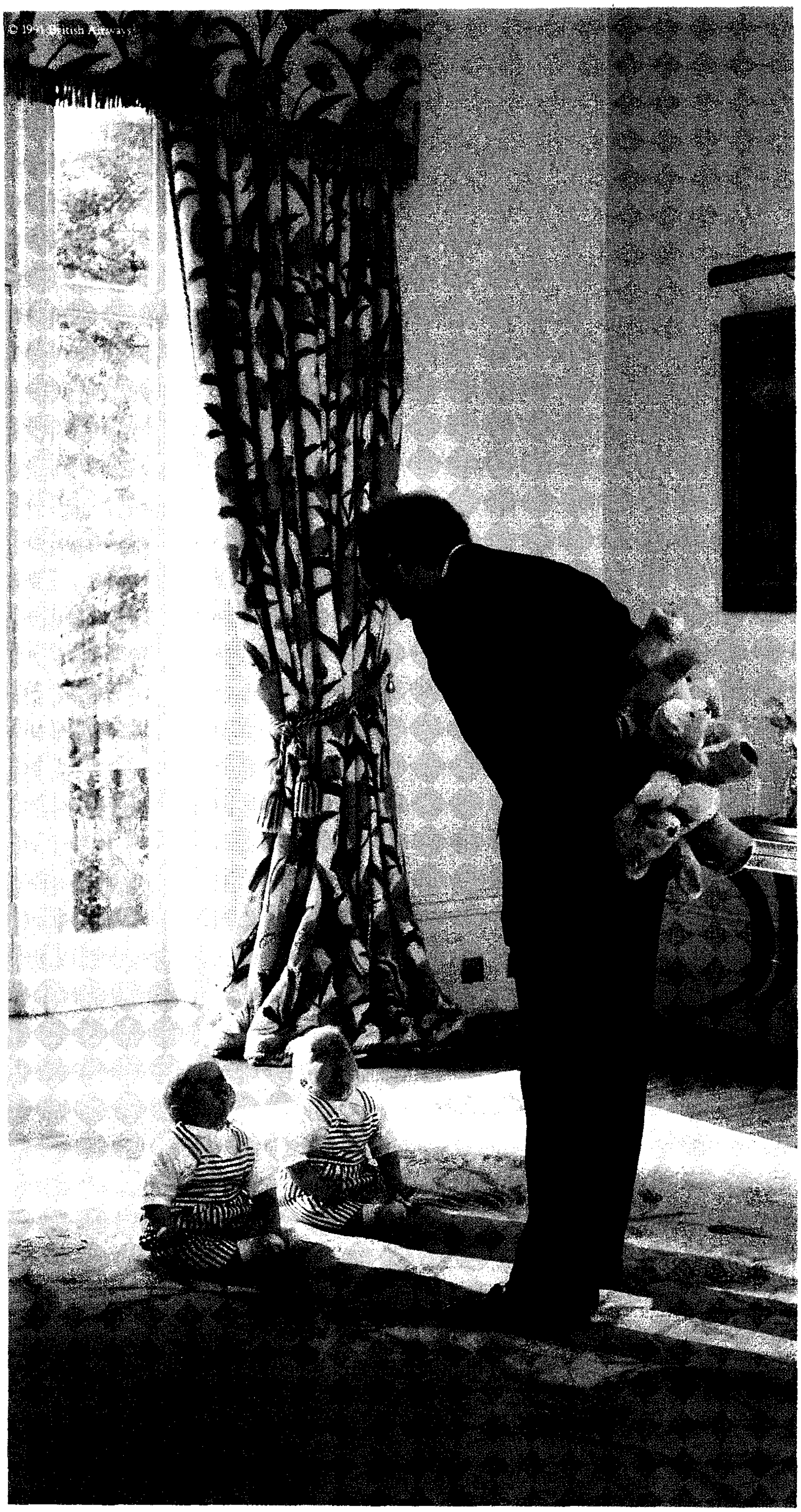
May 11: "The Threepenny Opera" (1931, G. W. Pabst; in German), with Lotte Lenya; and "The Blue Angel" (1929, Josef von Sternberg; in German), with Marlene Dietrich, Emil Jannings, and Hans Albers.

May 12: "The Big Heat" (1953, Fritz Lang), with Glenn Ford, Gloria Grahame, Alexander Scourby, and Lee Marvin; and "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt" (1956, Fritz Lang), with Dana Andrews and Joan Fontaine.

May 13: "Monkey Business" (1931, Norman McLeod), with the Marx Brothers; and "Horse Feathers" (†).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—May 4 at 2:30: "The Extraordinary Adventures of Mister West in the Land of the Bolsheviks" (1924, directed by Lev Kuleshov; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 4 at 6 and May 12 at 2:30: "The End of St. Petersburg" (1927, V. I. Pudovkin; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 5 at 2:30: "Potemkin" (1925, Sergei Eisenstein; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 5 at 3 and 6: "A Bullet in the Head" (1991, Attila Bertalan). . . . ¶ May 5 at 6 and May 9 at 5: "Bed and Sofa" (1927, Abram Room; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 7 at 2:30: "Wings of a Serf" (1926, Yuri Tarich; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 7 at 3 and 6: "Chasing Shadows" (1990, Naomi Grym), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 7 at 6: "The Club of the Big Deed" (1927, Grigori Kozintsev; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 8 at 2:30: "Strike" (1925, Sergei Eisenstein; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 8 at 3 and 6: "Current Events" (1989, Ralph Arlyck), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 8 at 6: "Katka's Reinette Apples" (1926, a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ May 9 at 2: "Red Demons" (1923,



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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Ivan Perestiani; a Russian silent film).... ¶ May 9 at 2:30 and 5: "American Tongues" (1987, Louis Alvarez and Andrew Kolker), a documentary.... ¶ May 10 at 2: "Parisian Cobbler" (1927, Friedrich Ermler; a Russian silent film).... ¶ May 10 at 2:30 and 5: "Family Gathering" (1988, Lise Yasui), a documentary.... ¶ May 10 at 5: "Mother" (†).... ¶ May 11 at 3: "The Man with the Movie Camera" (1929, Dziga Vertov; a Russian silent film).... ¶ May 11 at 6:30: A program of films by Linda Tadic, who will be present.... ¶ May 12 at 3 and 6: "One Banana, Two Bananas" (1990, Natalie Sternberg) and "To Care" (1988, Nicolas Kaufman), both documentaries.... ¶ May 12 at 6: "Kino Glaz" (1924, Dziga Vertov; a Russian silent film).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—May 4 at 2 and 6: "Cactus" (1986, Paul Cox).... ¶ May 4 at 4 and 8, May 5 at 2 and 6, and May 7 at 8: "Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh" (1987, Cox), a documentary.... ¶ May 5 at 4 and 8, May 6 at 2 and 6, and May 7 at 4: "Island" (1989, Cox).... ¶ May 6 at 4 and 8 and May 7 at 2 and 6: "Golden Braid" (1990, Cox).... ¶ May 8 at 2, 4, 6, 8:15, and 10:15, May 9 at 4, 6, 8, and 10, May 10 at 6, May 11 at 8, May 12 at 6, and May 13 at 8: "Locked Up Time" (1990, Sibylle Schönemann), a documentary.... ¶ May 9-10 at 2: "The Nutcracker Prince" (1990, Paul Schible).... ¶ May 10 at 4 and May 11 at 2 and 6: "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" (1964, Sergei Paradjanov; in Ukrainian).... ¶ May 10 at 8 and 9:45, May 11 at 4, and May 12 at 2 and 8: "Sayat Nova" (1969, Paradjanov).... ¶ May 12 at 4 and May 13 at 2 and 6: "The Legend of Suram Fortress" (1985, Paradjanov and Dodo Abashidze; in Georgian).... ¶ May 13 at 4: "Ashik Kerib" (1988, Paradjanov).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"Silent Witness: Russian Cinema Before the Revolution." May 9 at 2: "Jenny the Maid" (1918, Yakov Protozanov).... ¶ May 9 at 4: "People Die for Metal" (1919, Aleksander Volkov).... ¶ May 10 at 2: "The King of Paris" (1917, Evgenii Bauer and Rakhmanova).... ¶ May 10 at 4: "For Luck" (1917, Bauer) and "Engineer Prait's Project" (1918, Lev Kuleshov).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—May 8 at 6: "Old and New" (1929, Sergei Eisenstein).... ¶ May 8 at 8 and May 10 at 6: A program of films by Rüdiger Neumann.... ¶ May 8 at 10: A program of over a hundred films by Louis and Auguste Lumière.... ¶ May 9 at 2: "Man of Aran" (1934, Robert Flaherty), a documentary.... ¶ May 9 at 4: "Berlin, Symphony of a Great City" (1927, Walter Ruttmann; silent); and "The Blood of a Poet" (1930, Jean Cocteau; in French).... ¶ May 9 at 6: "The Man with the Movie Camera" (1929, Dziga Vertov; a Russian silent film).... ¶ May 9 at 9 and May 10 at 2: "The Left Side of My Brain" (1992).... ¶ May 10 at 4: "Aerograd" (1935, Alexandr Dovzhenko).... ¶ May 10 at 8: "Intolerance" (†).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 13 at 12:30 and 6: "César and Rosalie" (†).... ¶ May 13 at 3:15 and 8:45: "Le Sauvage" (1975, Jean-Paul Rappeneau; in French), with Yves Montand, Catherine Deneuve, Luigi Vannucchi, and Tony Roberts.

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. (1-718 783-6501)—A program of films directed by Israeli women. May 10 at 2: "Dead Line" (1989, Nitza Gonen) and "A Thousand Little Kisses" (1981, Mira Recanati).

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—May 5 at noon: "Chang" (1927, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack), a documentary.... ¶ May 12 at noon: "Let's Get Lost" (1988, Bruce Weber), a documentary about Chet Baker.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

American Dream—Barbara Kopple's documentary, about a strike in a Minnesota meatpacking plant, is a lucid and unfussy piece of movie journalism which manages to be as complexly affecting as a great novel. The story that she tells here is a terrifying one. The workers at the Austin, Minnesota, plant of Geo. A. Hormel & Company decide to go on strike on August 17, 1985, rather than accept a rollback of their wages and benefits. The union, Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, is led by a militant president, Jim Guyette, and a fiery free-lance consultant, Ray Rogers. Together, Guyette and Rogers create a terrific spirit of energy and resolve in the rank and file. But Lewie Anderson, a veteran negotiator for the international union, thinks that their strategy is "doomed." As the strike wears on, our reactions to what we're seeing become more volatile. Our hearts are with the pumped-up rank and file of P-9, but our heads, increasingly (and surprisingly), are with the pragmatic Anderson: his analysis of the local's chances against the company proves accurate in virtually every particular. The movie embodies a kind of tragic understanding of American life—tragic in the original and the fullest sense, in which the spectacle of unspeakable calamity produces pity and terror and then an unforeseeable and penetrating clarity. This is a masterpiece of social art. Academy Award for best documentary in 1991.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/92.) (Quad Cinema.)

The Babe—In keeping with Arthur Hiller's direction and John Fusco's screenplay, John Goodman portrays the Sultan of Swat as a man who wore his inner child on his baseball shirtsleeve. This bio-pic isn't as sanitized and sanctimonious as the 1948 "The Babe Ruth Story," which starred William Bendix. Here, the young Babe is labelled "incorrigible" and the overgrown Babe is a violent, crude carouser. But it's almost as sappy as the first movie. This Babe makes messes and is uninhibited to a fault, yet he's also loving and caring as well as powerful. All his second wife, Claire (Kelly McGillis), has to do is housebreak him. Except for his overweight, Goodman should have been perfect for the title role: like Ruth, he's a regular Joe of hugely irregular proportions in appetite and accomplishment. Too bad Hiller and Fusco cut him down to size. There's a last-minute attempt to show that Ruth had the baseball intelligence to be a manager, but during most of the movie what you see is Goodman trying to slaughter the horsehide. With Trini Alvarado as Ruth's first wife, Helen, and Bruce Boxleitner as Joe Dugan.—M.S. (5/4/92) (Coronet, and Worldwide Cinemas.... ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex. Evenings only.... ¶ Bay Cinema, and Park & 86th Street Cinemas; through May 7.)

Basic Instinct—A vicious, grindingly manipulative urban mystery that uses a thick atmosphere of S & M kinkiness to distract the audience from the story's thinness and inanity. Michael Douglas plays a cop with a "dark side." Sharon Stone plays a rich, beautiful bisexual novelist who is the prime suspect in a murder case. He falls in love with her, and the two of them breathe heavily through the rest of the picture. Stone has a few bright moments early on. But our basic instinct as we watch Douglas's strenuous grimaces of sexual transport is to flee the theatre. And the mystery is so ineptly constructed that it's not much fun trying to work out the solution. We sense that the screenwriter, Joe Eszterhas, and the director, Paul Verhoeven, don't have any respect for the genre—that they're too jaded to care about anything but giving us enough voyeuristic jolts to keep us awake. When the picture is over, we realize that the only suspense that it has produced effectively is a weird kind of ideological suspense. Will the movie take its smarmy misogyny all the way, or will it pull back in the end? It goes all the way. Also with George Dzundza and Jeanne Tripplehorn; there's a very peculiar cameo by Dorothy Malone.—T.R. (4/6/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Loews Orpheum VII, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Beauty and the Beast—It's got storytelling vigor and clarity, bright, eclectic animation, and a frisky musical wit. In this Disney version of the fairy tale, Belle (the voice of Paige O'Hara) is a book-reading French provincial girl—a virtuous sort of Mademoiselle Bovary. She dreams of a Prince Charming but gets more than she bargains for when she becomes hostage to the buffalolike Beast (the surprisingly orotund Robby Benson). Underneath his fang-gnashing glower, he's a prisoner of adolescence—unlike Peter Pan, he wants to grow up. He's the opposite of Belle's lunkheaded village suitor, Gaston (Richard White), a narcissistic macho man. Throughout, the Howard Ashman–Alan Menken score is clever and fluid in the best Lerner and Loewe manner, with flashes of oddball humor that keep everything light and bouncy. (Gaston's theme song trumps "C'est Moi," from "Camelot.") There's a great cast of supporting utensils at the Beast's enchanted castle, led by Jerry Orbach in an ebullient vocal turn as the Chevalier-like candleholder, Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers is Cogsworth, the mantel clock; Angela Lansbury is Mrs. Potts, the teapot; and Jo Anne Worley is the Wardrobe. There isn't anything particularly haunting, and not all the script's variations are fresh. But this is easily the zippiest Disney cartoon feature in the thirty years since "101 Dalmatians." Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise directed the screenplay by Linda Woolverton.—M.S. (Sutton, and Embassy.... ¶ Village East Cinemas. Matinées only.)

Beethoven—The director, Brian Levant, mixes a grand canine cast with drab dramatis personae, including a cruel, avaricious vet (Dean Jones) who specializes in dognapping, and an uptight suburban daddy (Charles Grodin) who manufactures air freshener. The eponymous hero is a St. Bernard pup who grows into a hundred-and-eighty-five-pound behemoth, wreaks havoc on Grodin's home, eats everything in sight, and does good by his adopted family. This is a family affair with a vengeance: anyone outside the nuclear core is not to be trusted. But the only persuasive bonding occurs between Beethoven and an unidentified terrier, who are together for just a few minutes. The screenplay is credited to Edmond Dantes—the Count of Monte Cristo—and Amy Holden Jones.—M.S. (5/4/92) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.... ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex, and Olympia. Matinées only.)

César and Rosalie (1972)—Yves Montand, in a jovial, parodistic performance as César, a scrap-metal tycoon—a super-confident self-made man who enjoys being No. 1 in work and in play. He adores Rosalie (Romy Schneider), and there are no obstacles to their happiness; they have everything—yet almost inexplicably, before our eyes, it evaporates. An old love of Rosalie's—an eminent cartoonist (the wan, elegantly despondent Sami Frey)—turns up, and when she sees him again, her feelings about César change. Nobody's fault—just bad luck; it's as if César were cuckolded by a moonbeam. Whenever you think the relationships are going to be stabilized into formulas, the picture wiggles free. It's a fluky, wry ode on the imperfect, haphazard nature of romantic love. What sustains it is that it never takes its three subjects too solemnly; the movie's essential frivolousness makes its melancholy tone acceptable: we can laugh at the characters' self-centered sorrows. Directed by Claude Sautet, the film suggests a *chanson*. The script is by Sautet and Jean-Loup Dabadie; the whirling, soft-colored cinematography is by Jean Boffety. With Umberto Orsini and Isabelle Huppert. In French.—P.K. (Florence Gould Hall; May 13.)

Day for Night (1973)—François Truffaut made this tribute to the conventional movies that once gave him pleasure, and apparently still did. He himself plays a director who is shooting an American-financed film called "Meet Pamela," with Jean-Pierre Léaud, Jean-Pierre Aumont, Jacqueline Bisset, and Valentina

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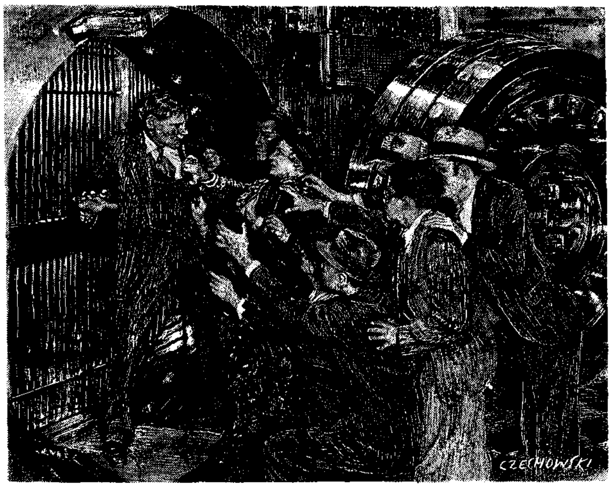
"American Madness" (playing April 8-10, at Film Forum 2), Frank Capra's thumping 1932 melodrama about a run on a bank, shows off the director's innovative stagecraft and pacing, as well as his paternalistic appeals to the little guy. Walter Huston plays a Great White Father of a bank president who believes in getting faltering businesses back on their feet and granting loans to individuals on the basis of character. Right after he does battle with his board of directors, the vault is robbed, sparking rumors of default and sending depositors rushing to withdraw their money. Huston gives a controlled bravura performance and creates a man worth rallying around: part sophisticated power broker and part cracker-barrel philosopher. He quickens the banker's hokey speeches and the sentimental attentions he pays to his employees. This old-fashioned star supplies moments of genuine feeling—at one point, when he's near humiliation, he flashes a defiant boyish smile.

The cast includes Pat O'Brien, Constance Cummings, Kay Johnson, and Gavin Gordon (sporting horrendous plucked eyebrows). The director does some of his sharpest work with bit players, such as the bored telephone operator who inadvertently catalyzes the run. Capra incorporates documentary details that make the mechanics of banking seem dynamic, and orchestrates an eerie shootout in nocturnal shadows. The movie falls flat only in its easy resolution and push-button optimism. "American Madness" marked the fullest collaboration yet between Capra and screenwriter Robert Riskin, who'd previously composed dialogue and provided material for Capra. Their notion of a gutsy idealist galvanizing the good faith of common folk anticipates the most famous movies Capra made without Riskin: "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" and his second tribute to a banker, "It's a Wonderful Life."

Cortese. "Day for Night," unfortunately ordinary in its approach to character, is very childlike—filled with a deeply innocent love of the magic of moviemaking. There's not much to it, though it's graceful. In French.—P.K. (Public Theatre; May 8-10.)

Deep Cover—Hip novelist-screenwriters Michael Tolkin and Henry Bean must not have watched enough TV in the eighties to realize that the premise of their script—an undercover cop gets sucked into big-time drug life—has been done to death. The director, Bill Duke, a veteran of shows like "Hill Street Blues" and "Miami Vice," should have fessed up. Larry Fishburne plays the righteous policeman who goes to work for the D.E.A. and discovers that he loves being a narcotics baron. Jeff Goldblum is the drug-dealing Jewish lawyer who becomes his partner in crime. Goldblum gets most of the good lines and a fair share of the awful ones. He knows what to do with them, but his character is self-loathing and loathsome—the White Negro in a slick post-yuppie edition. The visuals are as gaudy as the language (Bojan Bazelli did the look-at-me cinematography), and the plot is jolt-happy. If there's such a thing as dull flash, "Deep



Walter Huston (left) in "American Madness"

Cover" defines it. With Gregory Sierra, Charles Martin Smith, Clarence Williams III, Sydney Lassick, and Roger Guenveur Smith.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Manhattan Twin, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Olympia. Evenings only.)

Horse Feathers (1932)—The Marx Brothers in one of their niftiest corny-surreal comedies; it isn't in the class of their "Duck Soup" but then what else is? The setting is academic, with emphasis on football; Groucho is Professor Wagstaff, the new president of Huxley College, who explains his policy in the song "Whatever It Is, I'm Against It," and Thelma Todd is the college widow to whom all four brothers make overtures. So there's some naughty sense to it when Groucho sings the picture's theme song to her, "Everyone Says 'I Love You!' " Norman McLeod directed from a screenplay by Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby (who also wrote the songs) and S. J. Perelman and Will B. Johnston. With Robert Greig as the solemn-voiced biology professor, David Landau as the villain, and Nat Pendleton.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 13.)

Howards End—James Ivory's movie version of the 1910 E. M. Forster novel is a handsome and intelligent piece of work: a faithful, well-paced, and carefully crafted dramatization of a very good story. The heroine, Margaret Schlegel (Emma Thompson), is a thirtyish Englishwoman of German ancestry who lives with her sister and her brother in a London town house. The plot brings the cultured and rather high-minded Schlegels in contact with a very different sort of family, the Wilcoxes, who appear to represent English values at their most infuriatingly solid and complacent. The emotional core of the movie is the brief, unlikely friendship that develops between Margaret and conservative Ruth Wilcox (Vanessa Redgrave), a woman who inhabits a narrow world so profoundly, and with such enormous feeling, that she transforms it. Redgrave is at her most radiant in this role. And Thompson, whose character is meant to be seen as the heir to Mrs. Wilcox's thoroughly English kind of spirituality, comes through with a thrilling, original performance; she carries the movie. These luminous performances go a long way toward putting Foster's ambitious ideas across on the screen. (Anthony Hopkins, as the no-nonsense businessman Henry Wilcox, is awfully good, too.) The story holds us for the full two hours and twenty minutes that the movie takes to tell it; Ivory and his screenwriter, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, have done a skillful and sensitive job of adaptation. All that's missing, really, is the elusive quality that makes Forster such a brave, moving writer: his constant striving to see beyond the story, to see through it, to transcend it. Also with Helena Bonham Carter, Samuel West, James Wilby, Nicola Duffett, Prunella Scales, and Adrian Ross Magenty.—T.R. (5/4/92) (Loews Fine Arts.)

Intolerance (1916)—D. W. Griffith's epic celebration of the potentialities of the film medium—perhaps the greatest movie ever made and the greatest folly in movie history. It is charged with visionary excitement about the power of movies to combine music, dance, narrative, drama, painting, and photography—to do alone what all the other arts together had done. In this extravaganza one can see the source of most of the major traditions of the screen—the methods of Eisenstein and von Stroheim, the Germans and the Scandinavians, and, when it's bad, De Mille. It combines extraordinary lyric passages, realism, and psychological details with nonsense, vulgarity, and painful sentimentality. Four stories set in different historical periods are told by crosscutting, and they reach simultaneous climaxes. The cast includes Lillian Gish in the linking device; Mae Marsh and Robert Harron in the modern story, "The Mother and the Law"; Bessie Love in the Biblical story, "The Nazarene"; Margery Wilson and Eugene Pallette in "The Medieval Story," which includes the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of the Huguenots, in 1572; and Constance Talmadge, Elmo Lincoln, Seena Owen, Alfred Paget, and Tully Marshall in "The Fall of Babylon." Cinematography by Billy Bitzer and Karl Brown; Griffith's assistants included W. S. Van Dyke, Tod Browning, and von Stroheim. Silent. The prints were originally dyed in several hues, and crews of girls added extra color frame by frame; the projectionists were also instructed to throw beams of red and blue light to intensify the effects.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; May 10.)

JFK—Oliver Stone's movie means to demonstrate that the assassination of John F. Kennedy was not the act of a disturbed Marxist loner named Lee Harvey Oswald but the result of a vast, complex right-wing conspiracy. The screenplay, by Stone and Zachary Sklar, packs an extraordinary amount of assassination lore into three hours and eight minutes; it also includes a ton of speculative material about governmental misconduct, and quite a few invented characters. The movie is a thick gumbo of truths, half-truths, unverifiable hypotheses, and pure rant, and Stone ladles it out indiscriminately. In essence, the conspiracy theory argued here amounts to a series of inferential leaps proceeding from a speculation (that J.F.K. was killed because he wanted to pull out of Vietnam and end the Cold War). It's all bombast and misdirection, like a courtroom summation by a lawyer who knows that he can't win on the evidence. Stone comes on like a fearless radical, but his attitude toward the audience is firmly in the Hollywood tradition: he tries to bypass the intellect and go straight for the gut. The picture plays like an endless episode of "America's Most Wanted." Its hysterical manner and its slipshod handling of the facts actually have the effect of diminishing the credibility of the case for conspiracy. The clearest sounds we hear in this movie are those of Oliver Stone shooting himself in the foot. With Kevin Costner as New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, Sissy Spacek as his wife, Gary Oldman as Oswald, and an all-star cast of witnesses and conspirators: Tommy Lee Jones, Joe Pesci (an abominable performance), Donald Sutherland, Kevin Bacon, Jack Lemmon, Ed Asner, John Candy, Walter Matthau. Garrison himself does a brief turn as Chief Justice Warren.—T.R. (1/13/92) (Eastside Cinema. . . . ¶ Worldwide Cinemas. Evenings only.)

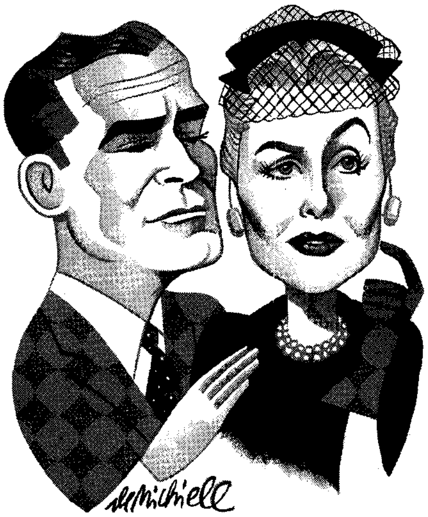
Mississippi Masala—In this multicultural variation on "Romeo and Juliet," the Capulets are East Indian refugees from Uganda, and the Montagues are African-Americans who live and work with them in Greenwood, Mississippi, circa 1990. Denzel Washington stars as Demetrius, a can-do guy with his own carpet-cleaning business; Sarita Choudhury, in her feature début, plays Mina, a vaguely dissatisfied motel maid. If Demetrius and Mina are meant for each other, it's solely because they're the best-looking couple in town. Their romance fails to move past physical attraction, and that's more than a disappointment—it's a crippling letdown. The director, Mira Nair, introduces viewers to a milieu in which Indians practice their bright-hued rituals while competing with whites in the motel trade and keeping a friendly distance from blacks. But Nair and her screenwriter, Sooni Taraporevala, try so hard to be all things to all racial and ethnic groups that by the end the story ceases to make sense on its own terms. You may feel that it has no terms of its own, only a good heart and the will to please. The talented supporting cast includes Roshan Seth, Sharmila Tagore, Joe Seneca, Tico Wells, and Charles S. Dutton; the keen-eyed cinematographer is Ed Lachman.—M.S. (4/20/92) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Mother (1926)—Frequently selected by critics as one of the greatest films of all time. Pudovkin's masterpiece, based on Maxim Gorky's novel, which is set during the 1905 revolution, is not overtly political; it gives an epic sense of that revolution through the emotions of the participants, and sweeps one along by its fervor and a brilliant and varied use of the medium. Vera Baranovskaya plays the mother who is tricked by the police into betraying her son (Nikolai Batalov). Pudovkin (unusual among the great Russian directors for his interest in acting) himself plays the officer who interrogates her. Silent.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; May 10.)

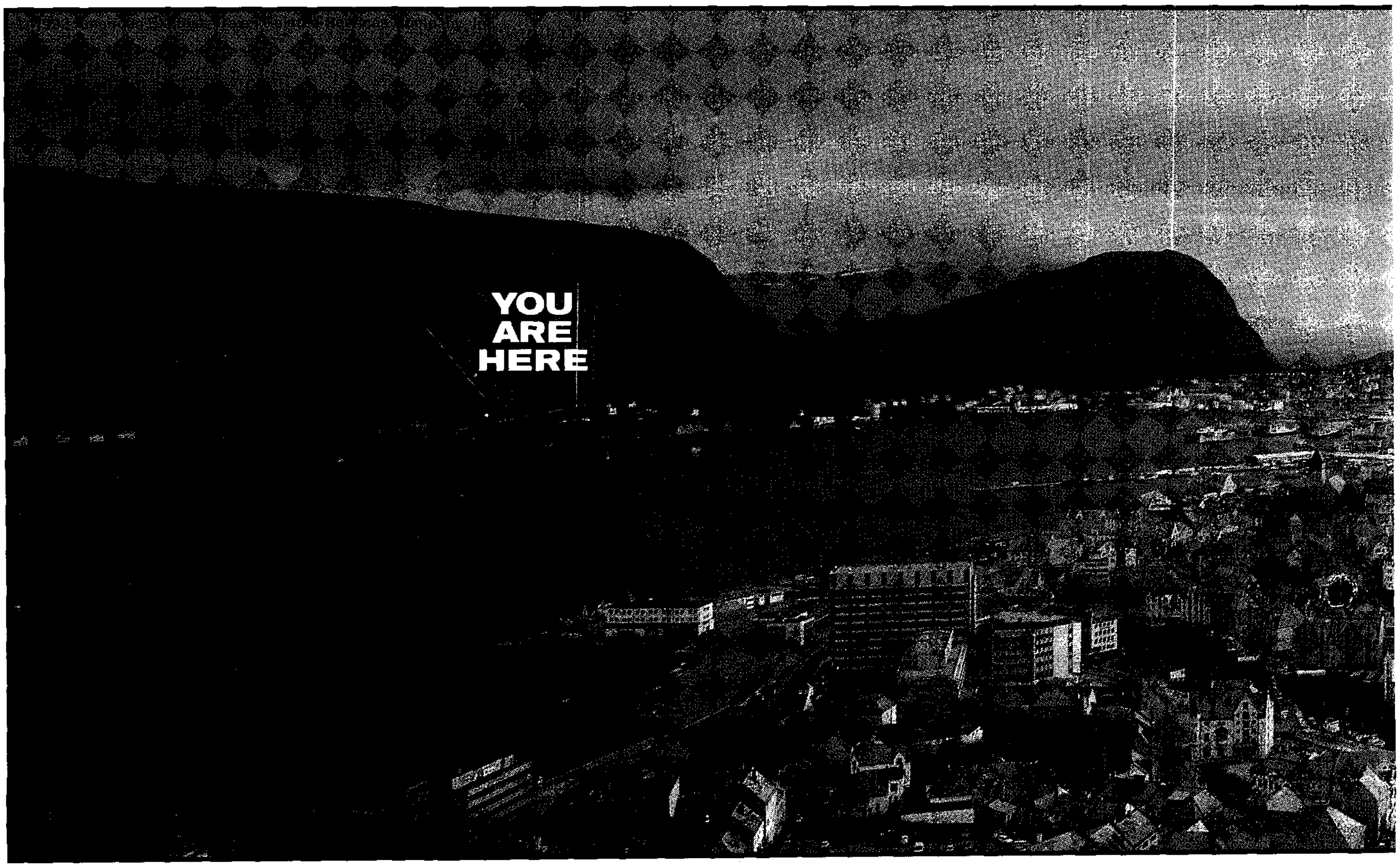
Movie Movie (1978)—It's better than the dum-dum title would suggest: it's a pair of skillful parodies of early thirties movies, written by Larry Gelbart and Sheldon Keller, and directed by Stanley Donen. The two "features," which give chances to a lot of new people, have some of the zest that the brash, intrepid performers fresh from the stage brought to early talkies. The star of both is George C. Scott, who seems to preside. In the first—a black-and-white spoof of Warners fight pictures—he's a white-haired old geezer, a manager-trainer to a young boxer. And in the second—a color parody of backstage musicals, principally based on "42nd Street"—he's slick-haired Spats Baxter, a Broadway impresario. As the night-school law student with the knock-out punch, Harry Hamlin makes an agreeable début, and as the wriggling night-club performer who corrupts him, Ann Reinking out-Ann-Margrets Ann-Margret. In the second, Barry Bostwick, who plays the singer-composer hero, has that wonderful Dick Powell candied-yam cheerfulness, and there's six feet four of him falling all over himself; Rebecca York is his saucer-eyed true-blue Ruby Keeler. With Kathleen Beller, Michael Kidd, Jocelyn Brando, Eli Wallach, Red Buttons, and Trish Van Devere, who has a tickling charm in the first but is totally miscast in the second. The film is too tame and too dependent on mismatched metaphors, and the second "feature" sags, but its generally friendly and enjoyable. There's an expendable introduction by George Burns.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 7.)

My Cousin Vinny—The recipe behind this Dixie-based comedy hit is simple. The Southern characters consider themselves the salt of the earth; the Northern ones are proud to be the pepper. Joe Pesci plays Vinny Gambini, a neophyte Brooklyn lawyer who hightails it down to Wahzoo City, Alabama, to help his college-boy cousin (Ralph Macchio) and a friend (Mitchell Whitfield) beat a bum murder rap. Vinny's quest takes at least thirty minutes too long. The producer-screenwriter, Dale Launer, bides his time, scattering hoary gags while planting details that eventually pay off. Luckily, the director, Jonathan Lynn, keeps the cork on Pesci, releasing his energy only in the trial sequences, and doesn't rely on him to carry the movie. Marisa Tomei, as Vinny's fiancée, imbues the most obligatory reactions with either a startling ferocity or a farcical ambiguity worthy of her character's name: Mona Lisa Vito. Fred Gwynne brings a wise, weighty charm to the role of a Yale-educated judge; in a cartoon, he'd be a basset hound called Beauregard. When Pesci sags, Tomei, Gwynne, and others (especially Austin Pendleton) perk things up. At best, it's a genial variety show that could use more variety.—M.S. (4/20/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 34th St. East, Crown Gotham, Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; through May 7.)

The Player—The title character of Robert Altman's new movie is a young Hollywood studio executive named Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins), who, for no very good reason, murders an aspiring screenwriter. The picture is a brilliant dark comedy about the death of American filmmaking. It's like a documentary about a mirage: the world it shows us is sunlit and shimmering, and the people have the thin presence of holograms. Altman is doing one of his specialties here—exploring an odd American subculture—and when his idiosyncratic realism is applied to the insular, constantly self-regarding community of Hollywood "players" it has an almost hallucinatory effect. The movie has the exhilarating nonchalance of the director's seventies classics, and its tone is volatile, elusive: with breathtaking assurance, it veers from psychological-thriller suspense to goofball com-



At Theatre 80 St. Marks,
Dana Andrews and Joan Fontaine in
"Beyond a Reasonable Doubt"



Introducing a Travelers Cheque for constan

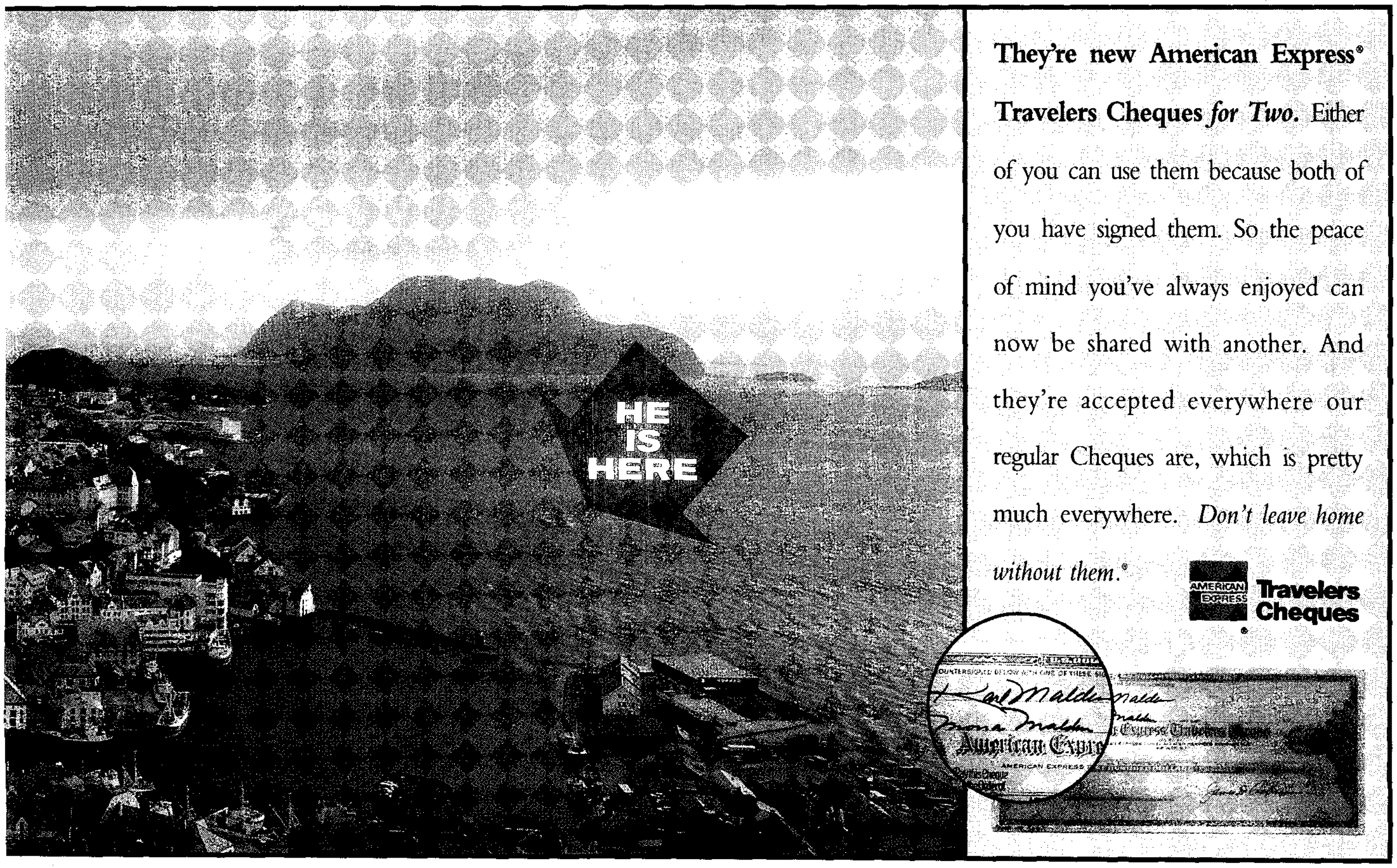
edy to icy satire. Altman turns the self-reflective world of Hollywood into a fun house in which every grotesque distortion somehow appears to us as a newly discovered, paradoxical truth. Robbins gives a layered, richly suggestive performance—the sort of performance that Altman's style, at its best, produces without obvious effort. At sixty-seven, Altman still seems like the youngest filmmaker in America. Also with Greta Scacchi, Peter Gallagher, Fred Ward, Whoopi Goldberg, Cynthia Stevenson, Vincent D'Onofrio, Lyle Lovett, Dean Stockwell, and Richard E. Grant; dozens of movie stars (and a handful of writers) turn up in cameos. The script, by Michael Tolkin, is adapted from his own novel.—T.R. (4/20/92) (Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ Loews Columbus Circle; through May 7.)

The Strong Man (1926)—At the time this picture (his best) came out, Harry Langdon—innocent, moronic, infantile, saintly, cunning—was widely held to be in the class of Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd. It was his second long comedy and his last box-office success; perhaps not coincidentally, it was almost his last association with Frank Capra, who had been instrumental in shaping Langdon's comic character. Langdon plays a Belgian soldier in the First World War who has become a pen pal of an American girl and comes to find her after the war; he eventually has to clean out the corrupt town she lives in. At one point he falls into the grip of a tough broad who is trying to steal some money from the lining of his coat; he misinterprets her action and gives a glorious rendition of outraged virtue. Written and directed by Capra. Silent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; May 11-12.)

Thunderheart—This murder mystery, set on a Sioux reservation, teams Sam Shepard, as an F.B.I. agent who speaks with forked tongue, and Val Kilmer, as an agent who thinks with forked mind. Kilmer's character is one-quarter Sioux, which apparently affects the right side of his brain—he gets mystical flashes and visions. When he hangs out with Indian traditionalists like the tribal cop played drolly by Graham Greene, his ancestral instincts emerge, leading him to truth, justice, and the Native American way. John Fusco's messagey script satirizes the stereotype of the all-knowing authentic Indian, then buys into it. The director, Michael Apted, elicits credible performances from Shepard and (in a tiny part) Fred Ward, and blends them confidently with the non-professionals in the supporting cast. But Kilmer is more callow than necessary. His lack of authority makes the raising of his consciousness seem more like a coming of age.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Loews Orpheum VII, and National Twin.)

Two for the Road (1967)—Other films by the director, Stanley Donen, are not so edgy. It's the self-consciously witty English scriptwriter, Frederic Raphael, who set his brittle stamp on this story of a husband and wife—Albert Finney and Audrey Hepburn—seen on European trips at different periods of their lives, not consecutively but shifting back and forth. The intention is to show a modern marriage in which ideal people, in love, and successful, are still not happy. Yet there's always a swimming pool for the characters to take their pratfalls in. Raphael is too much in love with old-movie comedy romances: he puts in tedious running jokes, such as the wife's forever turning up with the passport the husband loses. And at the same time the film is trying for a bitter comment on modern marital ennui, of the "La Notte" variety. The facile, comic bits set off audience expectations that are then betrayed, and the clever, bitter stuff just seems sour. Still, at times Hepburn is surpassingly beautiful—particularly at the end, when she's meant to be roughly the age she actually is, and her hard, lacquered mini-face is set off by a shining-disk gown. As the husband, Finney seems surly and beefy and rather infantile—which makes Hepburn look all the more gallant and poignant when the wife tries to make the best of things. The caricatures of Americans, played by William Daniels and Eleanor Bron, which would be embarrassingly overdone at fifty yards, are in closeup. With Jacqueline Bisset, Claude Dauphin, and Nadia Gray. Cinematography by Christopher Challis.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 7.)

White Men Can't Jump—A resourceful, sneaky-fast comedy about playground basketball. Ron Shelton, the writer and director, focusses on grown men trying to make a living at a boy's game, and he does full justice to the sweet absurdity of that enterprise. He keeps his eye on the fine points of playground culture and lets the story's meaning—and its humor—emerge from the details. The heroes, Sidney (Wesley Snipes) and Billy (Woody Harrelson), are addicted to the game. As a two-man team, they venture into the tough, hostile inner-city neighborhoods of Los Angeles and try to hustle the kings of the local courts. It's a great con: everyone assumes that Billy can't play the speedy, shake-and-bake style of black playground ball. Shelton and his crew (which includes the cinematographer Russell Boyd and the editor Paul Seydor) have put together basketball sequences that capture the free-flowing rhythms of the game. The two-on-two contests here give us the delicious feeling a player gets when he's *almost* out of control: flying but lucid. Harrelson's performance is rich, subtle, and delicately funny. And Snipes is just amazing: everything he does seems to leap off the screen. Shelton orchestrates the narrative like a veteran point guard: he's a wily pro with a streak of playground showmanship, and that's an ideal style for movies as well as for basketball. The picture has a generous spirit and a deep appreciation of play, and it moves with a distinctive funky grace: it takes things as they come and trusts itself to handle them. Also with Rosie Perez, Tyra Ferrell, Kadeem Hardison, and Marques Johnson. The terrific soundtrack features music by Aretha Franklin, Jimi Hendrix, James Brown, and Ray Charles.—T.R. (4/6/92) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 59th Street East Cinema, and Art Greenwich Twin; through May 7.)



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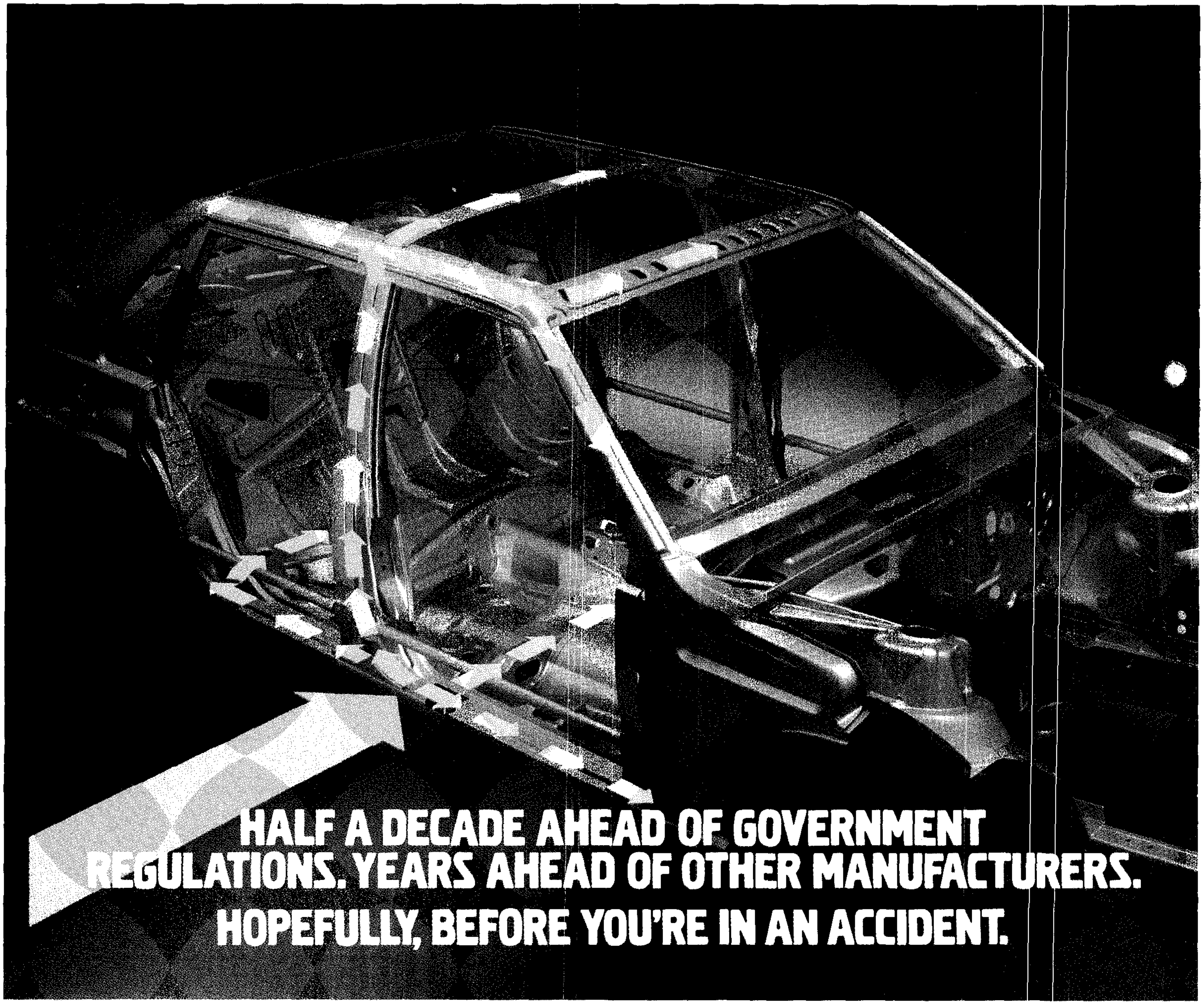
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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THE events in Los Angeles last week suggest that the tenuous social compact that has held this nation together for at least a generation has begun to unravel. People everywhere were dismayed by the almost incomprehensible verdict rendered in the case of the police officers who beat Rodney King, and many people in inner cities across the nation were furious to the point of violence. Naturally, the deaths and destruction are an occasion for grief and regret, but they should also lead Americans to some fundamental reflection.

There are only two options for dealing with racism and urban poverty in this country. Either we can start to seriously confront the plight of our inner cities, and treat it as the national emergency we all know that it has become. Or we can keep on with the policy we have been pursuing for the last generation; that is, we can ignore the problem, and continue to humiliate and dehumanize the residents of our inner cities, and try to contain their rage by relying more and more heavily on police intervention and on the prison system. The trouble with the second option is that—questions of morality aside—it no longer works, even on its own terms. The kind of cost-benefit analysis that implicitly underlay it—the idea that it is cheaper and more efficient to spend money on police and prisons than on the people who live in our inner cities—collapses utterly before the economic calamities we are only beginning to face: the losses in jobs, in housing, in property values.

By the end of last week, public officials in Los Angeles and throughout the country were desperately trying to halt the storm of rage with appeals to calm and reason. Mayor Dinkins, for example, has pointed out again and again, "Violence is not the answer." But what, as a nation, did we really expect? The residents of our inner cities have for many years now been unable to lay claim to our national sense of common humanity and simple decency. On what basis can we expect to suddenly lay claim to theirs?

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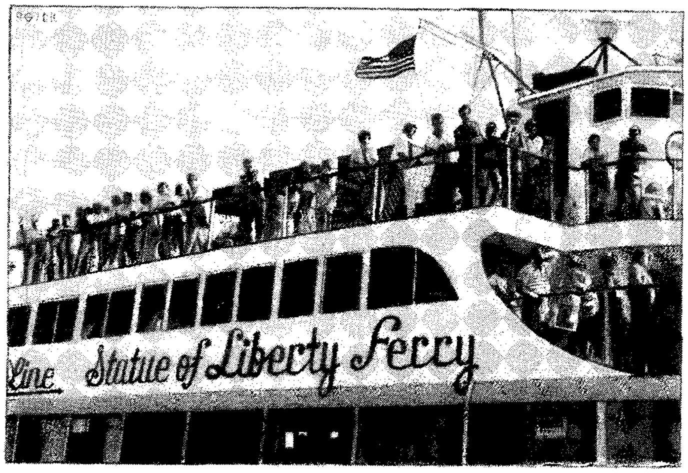
LAST month, as Boris Yeltsin's entire Cabinet threatened to step down and thousands of hard-liners marched in Manezh Square demanding Yeltsin's resignation and calling for the return of the Soviet Union, we realized what a difficult thing it is to be an ex-Soviet citizen right now. With the distractions of coups d'état, fallen Presidents, fractious governments, and outbreaks of fighting, it is easy to overlook the human face of history. Two hundred and ninety million people have been rendered effectively stateless by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and now face a precarious future with no guaranteed social contract. They are no longer Soviet citizens, and not really Russians, although that is the name they tend to fall back on. For the moment, the name of the place where they live is still the one that Yeltsin picked last December—Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimykh Gosudarstv, the Commonwealth of Independent States—and its inhabitants are already calling it the S.N.G., stuck in the habit of referring to their country by initials, but it is difficult to know whether they want to think of themselves as citizens of the S.N.G. or only as a group of people gathered by accident in the landmass that geographers call Central Eurasia.

We in the West may have thought of the Soviet Union as a backward nation that cruelly replaced serfdom with collectivized farms, or as a technological marvel that launched Sputnik and put the first man in space, or even as an evil empire. As a rule, we haven't thought of it as simply a country, capable of inspiring patriotic allegiance, and of providing a kind of security, if not affluence, for its citizens. So if it was unnerving this spring to see self-styled patriots marching on the Kremlin, and to watch Yeltsin's government waver from week to week between democracy and dictatorship, it was both unnerving and surprisingly touching to see Natalia Mishkutienok, the female half of the ice-dancing pair who took the gold medal in the Winter Olympics, frown and shake her head when she heard the Olympic anthem played to honor her, instead of the Soviet na-



tional anthem, and saw the pale-blue flag of the "Unified Team" raised, instead of the red-and-gold flag under which she had trained: she was participating in an international competition as a representative of a country that did not exist.

Reactions like Mishkutienok's are all the more affecting because they fly in the face of more widely publicized attitudes among her countrymen. When Mikhail Gorbachev ushered in the era of *glasnost*, allowing people to air their country's dirty linen without much fear of reprisal, it became fashionable for them to publicly deplore most things about the Soviet Union. Symbols like the flag and the anthem were not immune; in fact, there was an especially virulent press campaign against the anthem. One of its greatest foes was a *Moscow News* writer named Stanislav Rassadin: he acquired a certain renown for an article—headed "Why Is the Soviet Anthem So Insipid?"—in which he pointed out that the song was officially sanctioned by Stalin, and that when the Second World War was at its height Stalin had made a special trip to the front to congratulate the author "in order to delicately inquire if the author would have anything against his changing one punctuation mark." Rassadin added, "This while executing millions of people!"

In the current outspoken era, it has been easy to assume that while Russia, and the idea of Russia, could inspire grudging loyalty and love, the Soviet Union could not. Tolstoy's famous images—of Natasha Rostov dancing in a peasant cottage, and of the earnest Levin working the land with his serfs on his estate as he pines for Kitty Shcherbatsky—remain indelibly in our heads. This is the Russian soul we recognize in the West, and it is the essence of *rodina*—the word Russians use when they talk sentimentally about the land of their birth. But over the past seventy-five years a new, Soviet homeland became part of *rodina*, and the new images live on in the ex-Soviet Union, mingled confusingly with memories of a heroic deeper past. Ten-year-olds recite poetry by Lermontov and Pushkin, and protest when their new schoolbooks contradict the Communist precepts they learned in first grade. Twenty-year-olds leave flowers at the graves of Tchaikovsky, Chekhov, and Dostoyevski, and also line up at Lenin's Tomb.

Unlike Natalia Mishkutienok, many of her countrymen are probably ambivalent about the loss of their flag and their anthem, but the loss of their country's name and, through that name, their country is part of what has produced the present malaise. In a way, not only Mishkutienok's reaction but also Rassadin's is evidence of the hold that the now defunct Union had on its people. And it is this hold—the persistence of *rodina*—that motivates both the thousand-odd People's Deputies who daily challenge Yeltsin and the thousands who march against him. No matter what their political agenda, the first thing that these people want is a national identity.

We were reminded of that basic need when we saw a recent letter from a Russian who lives in Ukraine. He wrote, "Not one of us knows what country we live in—whether it is the Soviet Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Ukraine, or something else. The worst possible outcome, of course, would be civil war. We are trying to be optimistic; no one knows what awaits us tomorrow. It is true I believe there will be a tomorrow. That is, I am sure that tomorrow will come, and it won't be any better. We have a joke here. Two pessimists are talking, and one of them says, 'Life is dull and repetitive.' The second says, 'Oh, I think life is full of surprises. You think it can't get any worse, and then somehow it does.' They shake their heads and part. Five years later they meet again, and the second guy says, 'So what do you think of life now, compared with what you thought then?' The first guy says, 'Oh, back then? That was the good old days.' "

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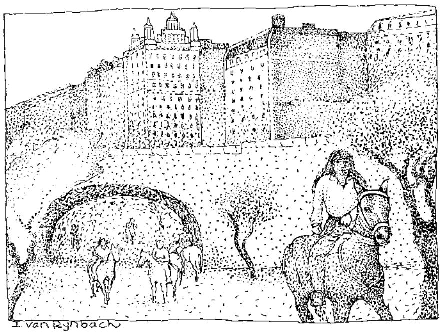
Smith

THE interdependence of paleontology and blacksmithing is one of the odder, and less self-evident, relationships in the ecology of crafts. Even the American Museum of Natural History, where it matters, hadn't thought much about it until recently, when the people there suddenly realized that in order to complete their big new dinosaur refurbishment what they needed most was a visit from John Little, a Nova Scotia blacksmith. As Phillip Fraley, one of the supervisors of the program of dinosaur restoration, explained the other day, the museum's need for a Down East blacksmith was a consequence of its decision to keep its dinosaurs honest. "In lots of natural-history museums these days, it isn't dinosaurs that are placed on display but foam-and-plastic models of dinosaurs," he said. "The dinosaurs in the new permanent entrance display in Roosevelt Hall, which everyone loves, *are* all foam and resin, and the biggest doesn't weigh more than five hundred pounds, but the museum made a decision that what would be on display in the actual fossil halls would be actual fossil material, which is not only heavier than foam but heavier than bone, too. It's stone, really—fossil stone. Stone skeletons have to be supported, and the only way to support them is with forged armatures."



Many of the existing dinosaur armatures at the museum will simply be overhauled, Mr. Fraley went on to say, but others will have to be completely reforged. Paleontologists now believe that Tyrannosaurus rex, for example, which generations of schoolchildren have seen rearing up like a hideous mutant kangaroo, its little forepaws dangling in the air, was in fact a stylish bipedal animal that raced along low to the ground, its huge tail and long neck balanced on the fulcrum of its hind feet; and on the basis of this assumption an entirely new, forty-six-foot-long armature will have to be forged.

While a lot of new information has been gained about dinosaurs, a lot of old information about smithing has been lost. "When we went to assemble a team to build the new armatures, we found that the only artisans who had even a general knowledge of smithing were artists—sculptors who had been trained in art school to do those big forged metal sculptures—and there were a lot of techniques in smithing that they didn't really grasp," Mr. Fraley said. "Fortunately, one of our team, a sculptor named Dion Kliner, had studied up in Nova Scotia with John

Little, who's a legendary blacksmith—one of the small group of smiths who have ever worked freehand with really large pieces of steel. So we thought we'd better fly John Little down here for a crash seminar in smithing techniques."

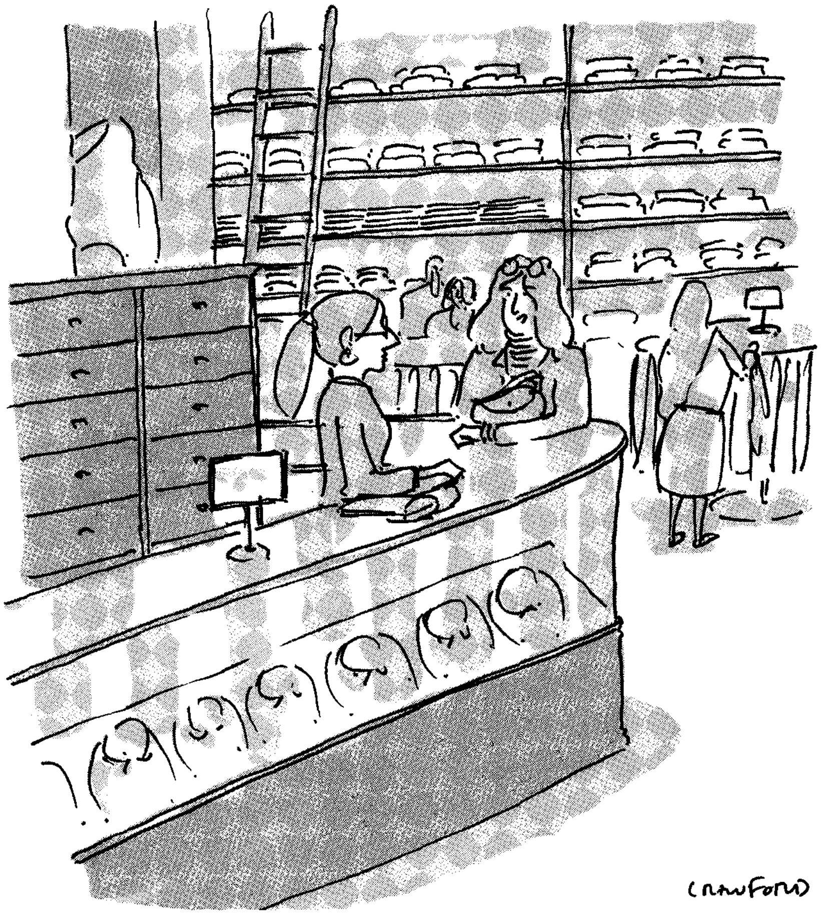
John Little conforms with such uncanny perfection to one's expectations of the ideal, storybook Nova Scotia blacksmith—the soft "eh"s, the pawky shaggy-dog-story humor, the wild-man beard, the appealing twinkle—that it's almost inevitable that he should turn out to be from a suburb of Paterson, New Jersey, and also to be an Ivy League alumnus (Brown '65) who has done time in graduate school (two years in behavioral psychology). He arrived in Nova Scotia in the mid-sixties, a refugee from the graduate-school wars, and had some misadventures in fishing. "I couldn't figure out why the local fishermen always wore white woollen mitts when they went out on the boats in winter," he says. "It seemed so *dainty*. Then I tried fishing for a year, and I found out: you wear white mitts so that you can see the blood when you cut yourself; your hands are far too numb to know." Then he chanced, in some way he can no longer recall, upon an anvil, and, after some teach-yourself-smithing failures, sought out an old Austrian blacksmith who happened to be living nearby. The blacksmith taught him the rudiments of the craft. For almost two decades, John Little has been one of a half-dozen smiths in Nova Scotia, and has been kept busy forging anchors for fishermen, stone drills for masons, and ornamental and sculptural ironwork. He estimates that there are only about three hundred full-time smiths left in all of North America. (He doesn't count farriers: they make only horseshoes, while blacksmiths can make anything from a fire screen to a forty-six-foot-long dinosaur armature.)

Around noon a couple of days after John Little arrived in New York, we stopped in to see him at the museum, and found him sitting down, bushed, in a corridor in the Vertebrate Paleontology building. Vertebrate Paleontology is a notably jocose department of the museum: plaster casts of dinosaurs are decorated with sweaters and sunglasses, and the department has also undergone an Elvis attack recently—portraits and memorabilia of the King fill the halls. Little, indifferent to all this, had exactly the look that you would expect on the face of a Nova Scotia blacksmith who had been working for two days at a gas forge, figuring out techniques for forging dinosaur armatures. "I've been having a good time here," he said cautiously. He was wearing a smithing outfit of overalls, a lumberjack shirt, steel-toed boots, and a heavy leather apron. "I would say that this has been a very intense forty-eight hours. I hadn't really experienced New York in thirty years." He shook his head, and a troubled look crossed his face. "Have you been to that Port Authority Bus Terminal recently?" he asked abruptly. "I mean, my God! There was one lovely woman, though, who had been placed in a little cage to sell tokens. She gave me the most wonderful smile, which I will always remember. Anyway, the team here is excellent. It's so interesting that the museum has to use artists—that only artists still have the craft. The artists took up welded and forged sculpture in emulation of the artisans, and now that the artisans have passed away the only people left with the knowledge are the artists. It's funny—when I was a little kid I often came to the museum on school trips, and I remember sitting in the stairwell and being really angry at all the visible props holding up the dinosaurs—they ruined the whole effect. So it's nice now that I get to come back, after all these years, and see if I can improve things."

When the team who will prepare the dinosaur armatures had returned from lunch, Little gave them a seminar in tool forging. "Half the problem in smithing is that you always need peculiar tools, so you often have to smith them yourself before you can smith your work," he said. "For this project I think you're going to need *very* peculiar tools."

The team gathered around the forge, which had been installed in a large, light-filled room on the second floor. Little asked them to pull down all the window shades, and when the room was darkened he put a long rod of tool steel in the forge.

Blacksmiths work in the dark not



"I need a jacket for the office. Nothing too Hillary."

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because they can't afford electric light but because, far more than raw strength, what is crucial to the craft of smithing is a Whistlerian sensitivity to fine nuances of color. “You can't do blacksmithing outdoors,” Little reminded his class. “Get all the light out you can.” He reached into the forge with his tongs and picked out the steel rod, which had turned yellow. “Now, this isn't an *oily* yellow,” he said. “It's a *plain* yellow. Oily yellow is too hot for tool steel. Your temptation is always to overheat a piece, so that you won't have to work so hard. But that will ruin the material irreparably.” He quickly brought the rod to his anvil and began hammering. With four or five strokes of a heavy hammer, he had turned the rod into a perfect, symmetrical awl. He let it cool and returned it to the forge. “Now look—it's red,” he said, taking it out again. “*Learn* these colors.”

“Uh, John?” one of the members of the class asked. “Uh, that red—would that be the red of a winter morning?”

Little didn't look up from his forge. “Well, what *time* in the morning? What kind of morning? I hate these *weather* colors, since skies change so much. Don't think about the sky—think about dull red. That's the red you see just as the steel turns nonmagnetic.” He touched a magnet to the hot surface. “There, *that* red. Now I need to quench this to harden it. What temperature is my quenching water?”

“About a hundred degrees,” someone ventured.

Little shook his head. “Just think blood,” he said, dipping the hot metal into a bucket with short, stabbing motions. “You want the water to pant, not sizzle. It should sound like a worn-out dog. Again, what's the *temperature* of the *water*?”

“Ninety-eight?” someone offered.

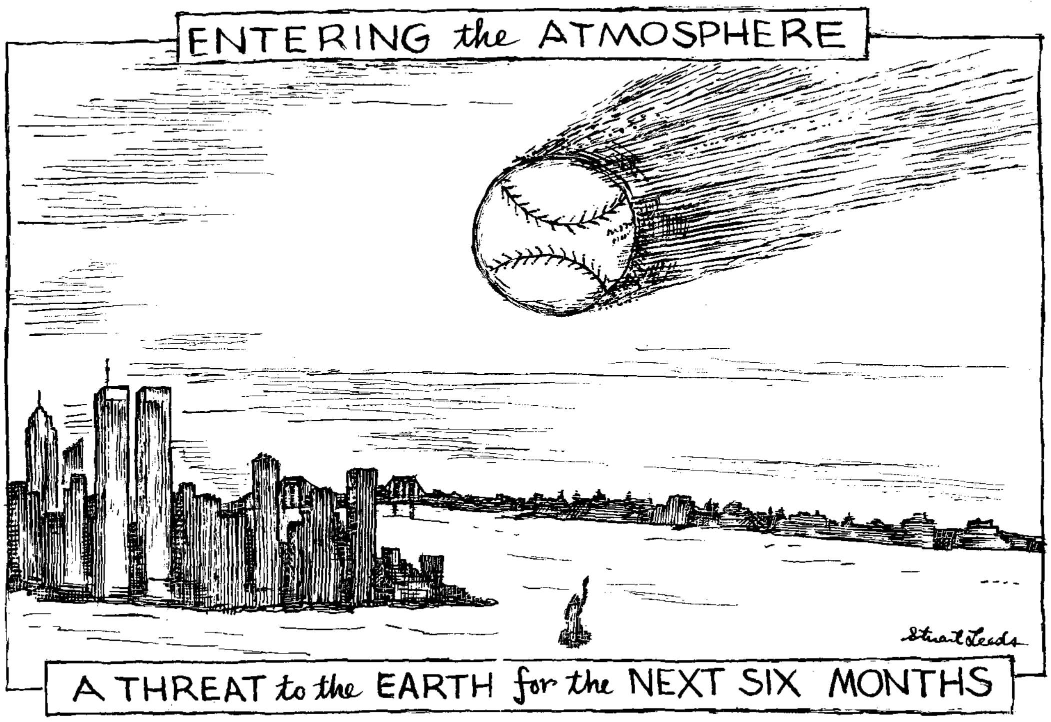
“*Blood*—just think blood,” Little said. He held the awl up, and pointed to the cooled end, which was turning, with surprising speed, from straw yellow to bronze as the heat in the unquenched handle of the tool ran to the tip. “Do you know the story of the Japanese apprentice?” He looked again at the tool. “The color of this should now be bronze,” he said. “A fine refracted bronze mottled with peacock. It's still straw yellow. O.K., the Japanese apprentice dips his hand into the smith's bucket to find out the temperature of his master's quenching water. No sooner has his hand touched the water than the master pulls out his sword and slices off the apprentice's arm.” Little again appraised the tool. “That looks better,” he said. “Do you see that peacock in there? Not a true bronze—sort of a *weathered* bronze.” The tool made a soft sigh as he quickly thrust it into the water. The awl was finished. “O.K., the apprentice's arm is lopped off. He smiles. He doesn't care about his arm. He felt the water. He remembers the temperature. That's my favorite blacksmithing story. My daughters love it.”

Yak

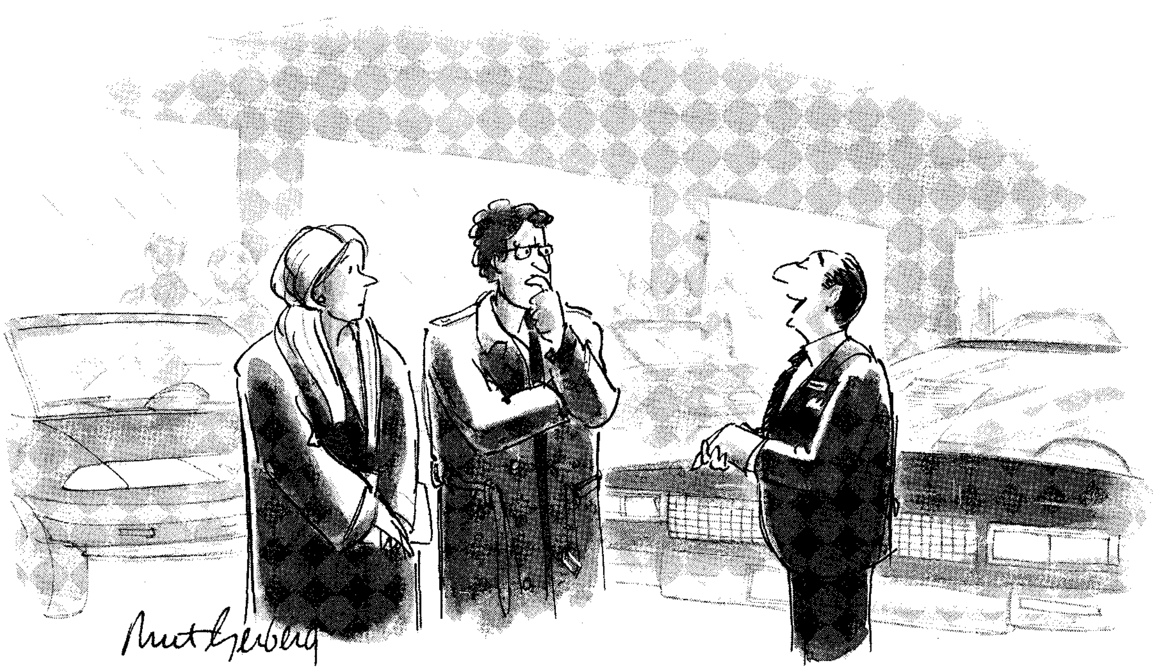
WHEN the subject of clown hair comes up, the name Joe Rapisarda just follows. Joe Rapisarda is a master wigmaker who has been employed for about twenty-five years by Bob Kelly Wig Creations, a local firm that produces hairpieces for Broadway shows, Las Vegas shows, and movies, and for people with what Rapisarda calls “problem hair,” as well as for circus folk. “Let me tell you,” he said the other day when we stopped by his workroom. “I've known a lot of clowns in my time.”

Like all high-quality wigs, Rapisarda's top-of-the-line clown wigs are made by weaving hair through a mesh cap. The hairs are pulled from a card and knotted into the foundation with a hooked tool called a ventilating needle. Much of the wig stock at Bob Kelly Wig Creations comes in fat bundles from Asia or India or Italy or, sometimes, the Bronx. “Virgin” hair—that is, hair that has never been dyed or crimped or permed—can cost upward of eighty dollars an ounce. (It takes four ounces or more to make a wig.) Clown hair costs less, as a rule, and that, Rapisarda explained, is because clown wigs aren't made of human hair; they're made of yak. “What's yak?” he said. “It's an animal. You didn't know?”

To get to Joe Rapisarda's workplace, you walk a few paces from Times Square, passing a Sbarro restaurant that was once a Show Folks Shoe Shop (“Dedicated to Beauty in Footwear”); enter a narrow building; and ride up nine floors. An etched-glass door admits you to Bob Kelly Wig Creations, a four-room beauty parlor where the heads can't talk. On the day we dropped by, eight women were sitting around a small table under fluorescent lamps making wigs for “Saturday Night Live.” Each had her head bent


ENTERING the ATMOSPHERE
Stuart Leeds
A THREAT to the EARTH for the NEXT SIX MONTHS

over a wig block and was weaving intently. The women's postures reminded us of Vermeer's "The Lacemaker," but these craftspeople were Latino and Chinese, and, of course, may well have been weaving a Deadhead shag for "Wayne's World."



"But we're not just talking about buying a car—we're talking about confronting this country's trade deficit with Japan."

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On shelves along the walls were wigs in various stages of completion. There were "Crazy for You" wigs and "Guys and Dolls" wigs and Jack Warden wigs and Susan Anton wigs. A row of shelves labelled "Joe's Blocks" held faceless muslin heads wedged between boxes marked "Plastic for Toupees" and "Wire Foundations." On a table littered with plastic curlers, a wig was being washed and set in preparation for being dried in an oven. Some half-finished wigs lying in a box nearby looked like scalping trophies.

As he conducted us around, Joe filled us in on the finer points of yak. "Most of it comes from Tibet," he remarked. "They got good Tibetan yaks, I guess." The great value of yak for use in clown wigs, he went on, is that it's wiry and tough and lends itself to strange styling. Yak stands up to pratfalls, food gags, shaving cream, and other experiences that ordinary wigs never encounter. Yak packs well and shakes out easily. It takes a set. "Two kinds of yak are used in clown wigs," Joe explained. "You got regular yak and then there's belly yak." He added that the kind of yak Bob Kelly Wig Creations imports is mainly belly—a softer, longer fur, from the animal's nether parts.

When a fresh shipment of yak arrives at Bob Kelly Wig Creations, the baled fur is first given to a woman named Maria Abraham to wash, rinse, dry, and run through a steel comb called a hackle. The laundered and hackled hanks are then dyed, trimmed, and knotted neatly, folded in white tissue, and laid in a shallow drawer marked "Yak Hair for Clown." Maria Abraham was having lunch near the washtubs when we arrived, her brown lunch bag flattened beside some luxuriant clumps of human hair.

"Maria, where's the yak?" Joe asked.

Without looking up, Maria Abraham nodded in the direction of the drawer. Joe tugged it open. Inside lay dozens of paper-wrapped coarse ponytails tinted in hues rarely seen outside a big top or north of Eighth Street. "We keep the colors separate until we blend the individual hanks for a wig," Joe said. "We mix and dye ourselves. What do we dye with? You want me to reveal our secret? O.K. You twisted my arm. It's Tintex. Most of your clowns are red, blue, or green. But you might want pink with a little bit of red. So we blend it. You might want multicolor. We blend that, too. Of all the clowns I know, more or less just one has black hair. That's Greg DeSanto, with Ringling Brothers. Matter of fact, I'm doing a wig for him right now."

Joe Rapisarda has worked in this ninth-floor shop above Times Square for a quarter century, and has mostly produced full-head wigs, although he's not above making beards, mustaches, or custom eyebrows, or special-effects wigs for movies where people get their heads blown off. His subspecialty in clown wigs accounts for only a fraction of his business. "I just fell into it," he told us. He creates no more than fifty clown wigs a year, a great many of them for performers with Ringling Brothers. "They're great people, but when the circus comes to town I make a novena I don't see clowns," he said. "There's no money in it. Three days' work and we still charge three hundred and fifty dollars. We haven't raised the price in fifteen years."

In the entranceway to Bob Kelly Wig Creations is a gallery of autographed head shots of a type so generic that it might be industry wallpaper. What distinguishes these pictures from the usual is that almost all the performers are wearing false hair. Among the bewigged celebrities we took note of were Paul Ford in a thinning toupee, Meryl Streep in the mousy cap she wore for "Cry in the Dark," Dolly Parton in a blond Niagara, Ruth Gordon in a gray pixie, and a mystery man in a hippie wig with a headband. "Who is that?" Joe Rapisarda asked. We were stumped. "Tony Randall," he said. "Nobody gets it on the first try." Another picture was of a man with a huge smile who was wearing a bald-domed Afro. Teased to a state of imposing loft, the hair had an upward-curving lip that was instantly recognizable. When we pointed the picture out to Joe Rapisarda, he gave a modest shrug. "Oh, Bozo," he said. "I've been doing Bozo for years."

LINTON'S WHATNOTS

SUNSET. The moors. A strong gale blowing.

Cathy: Oh, hold me, Heathcliff. Only in your arms am I truly happy. When Edgar Linton holds me I feel so cold.

Heathcliff: Your husband can never love you, Cathy. He will never see how cruel and fine and free you are.

Cathy: Edgar Linton's spirit is to mine as a small bedchamber washbasin to a great, deep millpond. The difference between us makes me tremble! Also, there's his . . . his collection of novelty nutcrackers.

Heathcliff: Linton, a collector? (*Wild, anguished laugh*) I should have expected it.

Cathy: He keeps them somewhere. In the tool cellar, I believe.

Heathcliff: Ha! And I suppose they are all hand-carved.

Cathy: I believe so. You will have to ask him.

Heathcliff: And hand-painted.

Cathy: Possibly. I hardly listen when he speaks of them.

Heathcliff: From Tahiti, no doubt, and Guinea, and of sandalwood from the Leeward Islands.

Cathy: Again, I would not know. He has such a very great many.

Heathcliff: I would think nothing of holding you this way even in the presence of Linton himself and all his damned novelty items!

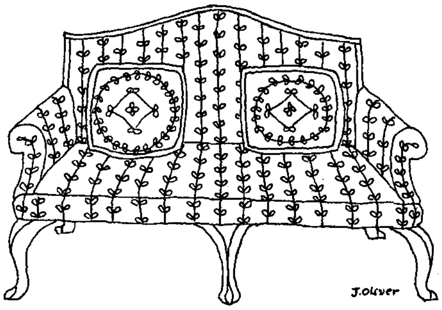
(*They kiss.*)

"HELLO, I'm Edgar Linton. Most of you know of the marital difficulties between my wife and myself. Others—more than a few, I hope—may recognize my name from certain monographs published in *The Cotswolds Hobbyist* and elsewhere. Catherine, bless her (for I love her still, despite everything), never understood my nutcrackers. I do not begrudge her that, nor that she called my life's hobby 'tedious'! To her, of course, it was. To me, it was a joy shot through with bright threads of exotica and adventure, mine to pursue in my own home through the wonders of parcel post.

"I did not, and do not, keep them in any 'tool cellar.' I don't know where she got that. The bulk of my collection is stored in a converted tack room below the conservatory, suitably cool and dry, fitted on three sides with sliding shelves in mahogany cases. To oversimplify rather drastically, all nutcrackers can be divided into two categories: those made of wood, and those made of other materials, such as stone, metal, or ivory. The larger number by far are of wood, hardwoods such as teak and walnut being preferred, inasmuch as you cannot crack a nut with soft woods like cypress or pine. Swelling and warping cause wooden parts—screw or lever mechanisms, often artfully, artfully carved—to jam. For this reason, low-moisture storage rooms are required.

"Now, as to the objects themselves. This one here is a favorite. You simply grasp the ankles like so, insert any nut you like (except perhaps a Brazil nut), and— You see? Rather neat. Or, again, you have this model, in which you grasp the back part, here, and the front part, here, insert the nut, turn in opposite directions, and crack. Seen from a distance, both of these make quite striking statuettes, if you prop them against something to keep them from falling over. This next one, as you see, is jointed at both the knees and middle, so that it can accommodate two or more nuts and shatter all at a go when you press upon the topknot.

"Here is one that Catherine particularly disliked. Something about the accuracy of the detail, I suppose, or the expression of the features. I was disappointed, of course, but I had grown used to her reactions. She set her jaw and turned away, forgetting for the moment to disguise that slight double chin I so adored. I knew she was only tolerating me, that every moment she spent viewing my collection her thoughts were with him to whom she was longing to fly. Really, she never gave the nutcrackers much of a show. The cleverness of this one's hinge, the way it duplicates an anatomical part, was lost on her. (What is even more saddening is that I am absolutely positive she would have loved this or any of the others if only she'd relaxed a bit.) She stood and listened for as long as she could bear, then muttered an excuse and hurried upstairs. Soon I heard from the room above me the faint sounds of her departure. I could imagine the passion of their meeting, her caresses more intense for the tiresome half hour I had made her endure. I filled the lamp with coal oil, the costlier, smokeless kind, and prepared for an evening of cataloguing.



"During these troubles I continued to be grateful for the kind solace and understanding of Dr. and Mrs. Hiram Ennis, of Philadelphia, U.S.A. Fellow-collectors will remember the Ennises well, although they are unknown to wider fame. Hiram and Marguerite, your devotion reminds me that the friends one makes collecting nutcrackers are friends indeed. Further, I would like to thank nutcracker fanciers Mr. Ulrich Link, of Ulm, Germany; Mr. Philip Clausing, of Austria; Mme. Berthe Olivet and her son Bertrand, of Paris; the Misses Buckingham, of Devon; and Mr. Frank McEachern, of the American firm of McEachern Nuts & Savories, Inc. Faithful friends, all! You must have known, or suspected, what was going on between Catherine and me and—him. I deeply appreciate the tact which kept all reference to my situation out of our newsletter."

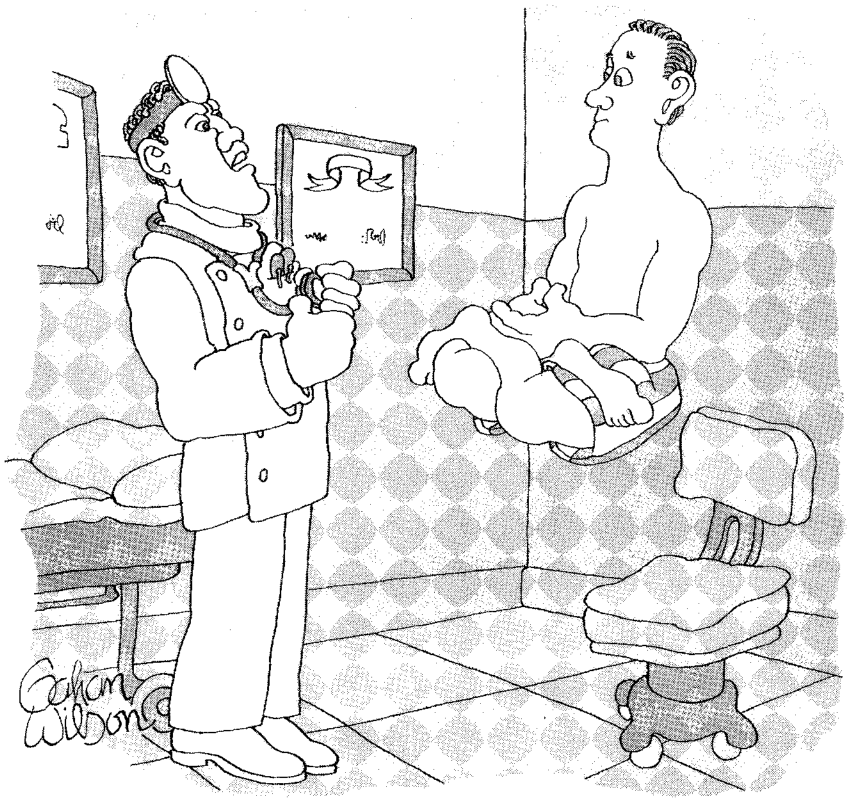
DR. AND MRS. ENNIS were on a collecting tour of the Southwest, and could not be reached. Mr. Frank McEachern submitted the following, on stationery with the company letterhead:

"Ed Linton has the best collection of nutcrackers in the world. In fact, it is so far superior nothing else comes close. His holdings in Modern Calisthenics pieces alone are better than most museums'. I have offered Ed prices five times list and more for 'crackers to add to our collection here at our main office, but he always refuses. He loves his hobby too much to profit from it. In a sense, Ed *is* nutcracker collecting. I've never met the wife. Of course, I don't know this other fellow she was mixed up with, but I can assure you that Ed's worth a hundred of him, whoever he is. Once—I couldn't help myself—I even wrote Mrs. Linton a letter and said so, in the plainest terms."

Mrs. Edgar Linton
Thrushcross Grange, etc.
England
Personal and Confidential

DEAR MRS. LINTON,

Although I feel it is hardly my place, under the circumstances, to speak of such things as pertain to intimacies between a husband and wife, and although I do not know you at all well—indeed, have never met you—yet I feel more than compelled to write to you, not, as I say, without certain doubts and reservations. Your husband is a fine man. Do you think you might use your influence to persuade him to part with a few of his nutcrackers, namely, the ones that look like ladies in gymnastic costume?



"You have achieved Nirvana, Mr. Harper, and a bad case of tennis knee."

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C*ATHY replied by return post.*

"I informed Mr. McEachern that if he ever attempted to write to me again, I would alert officials of the Board of Customs. Edgar, the coward! That he should waste his youth, and mine, corresponding with these types—Oh, Heathcliff, if you only knew how I suffered! But you were gone, and I was left for long, empty days with him and his whatnots. How I hated them, except for the ones—oh, you know, the ones with the little huntsman. I am sure you recall them. I asked Edgar if I could set them on the spinet. With the little huntsman with the musket? A sort of spring device catapulted the nut from the musket into the hole in the hollow tree, where there was a movable squirrel, or several. Aside from those, Edgar's collection excited in me the strongest loathing. Those, and the ones in the shape of pug dogs. And the little banty roosters. My darling, my truer soul, my second spirit! You grew up wild as a bramble on the common, you never had such curios for your distraction. How they would have fallen to pieces under your rough fingers, how you would have strewn filbert shells everywhere, caring not for those who might be barefoot but of tenderer hide than yours, in which number I must include myself."

H*EATHCLIFF:*

"Fiends of hell torment me at the memory! I recall the dull afternoon, the spinet dusty with disuse, and—ah!—Cathy's smooth and round hand holding that damned kickshaw of Linton's, although I should mention that the weapon the wretched huntsman in question aimed at the squirrel-infested stump was a crossbow, unmistakably, and nothing like a musket. I nearly took my blackthorn stick and smashed the thing to atoms, and the rest of the nutcracker menagerie in its belowstairs den or wherever it might be. I know he also had a few that went everywhere with him in the boot of his carriage, which he would haul out in one village or another and show to the populace, for what purpose I cannot tell, and those I wished to hurl beneath his wheels and scatter in splinters across the paving stones. Cathy, my Cathy! I hear the wild music of her voice, I see her graceful form as she operates that gadget, shelling nutmeats as the twilight descends, piling up far more than any ten people could eat.

"Write to me, ye ardor-starved hobbyists, Squire McEachern and your crew, and I'll commit your inky pages to my parlor fire, and warm my slippers with 'em. I crack nuts with my own strong back teeth, nothing more, or by stomping down with my bootheels, or hard in the crook of my right arm, if need be, and scoff at your mechanistical go-devils."

EPILOGUE: Nutcracker fanciers did indeed take Mr. Heathcliff up on his challenge, and wrote to him in such numbers as to strain the local postal service. Rather than burning all the letters, Mr. Heathcliff read one or two at idle moments, then scratched a few brief responses, and thus began a lively correspondence with Mr. Ulrich Link, of Ulm, Germany, which went from enmity, to growing respect, and finally to warm friendship, which continues today.

Cathy died, but not seriously. Edgar Linton made the (for him) unprecedented decision to allow a portion of his collection to tour the Continent and the eastern United States, with stops in all the major cities. From the revenues received, he was able to purchase some unusual cigar trimmers seized from a tobacconist for nonpayment of tariff. After a reasonable period of mourning, he began to look for a companion whose interests more closely matched his own.

—IAN FRAZIER

SILENT PASSENGERS

SHUT it off, Steiner told himself, and the station wagon was silent. He had pulled into the drive and up to the Chinese elm at the house without the reality of any of it registering, and now he turned to his nine-year-old, James, in the seat beside him, and saw the boy's face take on the expression of sly imbalance that Steiner had noticed in it for the first time this afternoon.

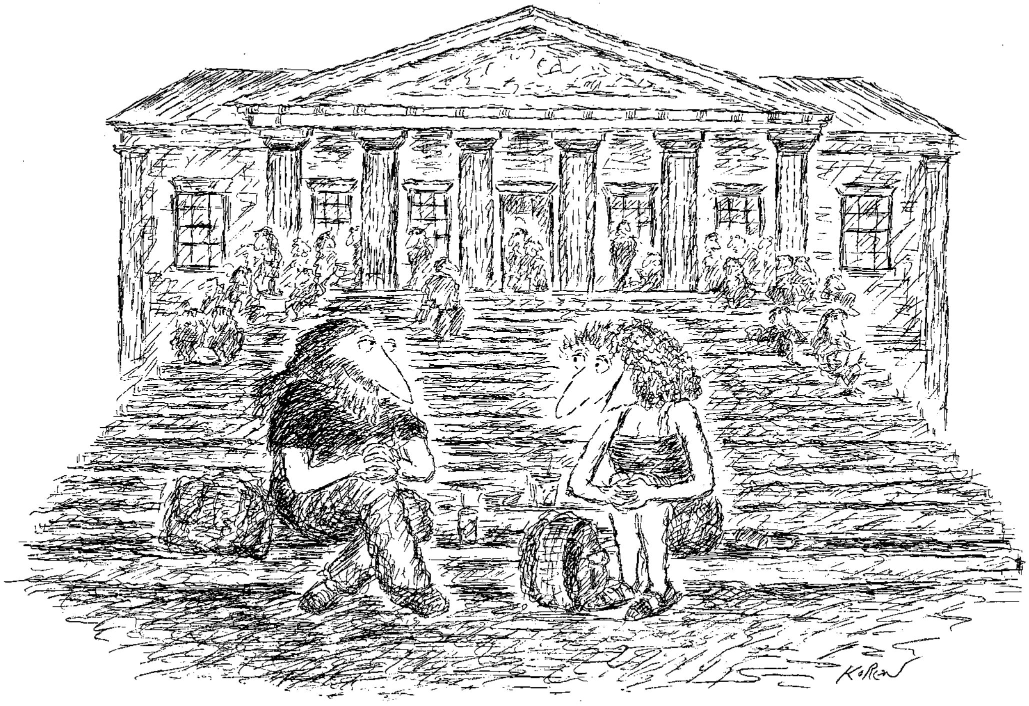
Steiner got out and James bucked against his seat belt, holding up a hand, so Steiner eased back in, shoving his unruly hair off his forehead, and took hold of the wheel. He was so used to James being out of the car and headed across the yard the second after they stopped that he felt dazed. His white-blond twin daughters, seven, who were in the rear with his wife, Jen, were whispering, and Steiner turned to them with a look that meant *Silence!* He got out again, with a heaviness that made him feel that his age, forty-five, was the beginning of old age, and that the remorse he'd recently been saturated with had a focus: it was a remorse that he and Jen hadn't had more children.

As he was driving home, a twin had pulled herself forward from the back seat and whispered that James had reached over and honked the horn while Steiner was in the department store, where he had gone to look for a shatterproof, full-length mirror and an exercise mat of the kind the physical therapist had recommended. And since James hadn't spoken for two weeks, the incident had set the twins to whispering about James, in speculative and hopeful terms (with James sitting right there!), for most of the long trip home.

"I'm sorry," Steiner said, seeing that he was still the only one outside the car, as if he had to apologize for being on his feet. He slid back in, brushing aside his hair again, and began to unbuckle James's seat belt. The boy stared out the windshield with an intensity Steiner couldn't translate, and, once free, tried to scoot over to the passenger door by bending his torso forward and back.

"Take it easy, honey," Steiner said, and then added for the boy and the others, in the phrase that he'd used since James was an infant, "Here we are home." Silence. Steiner turned to Jen, who was leaning close, her pretty lips set, and said, "Do you have his other belt?" She gave a nod.

Steiner got out and looked across the top of the station wagon, through the leaves of the four-trunked elm, at their aging farmhouse. He hadn't seen it in two weeks. He'd spent that time at the hospital with James, first in intensive care, then in a private room, where physical therapists came and went, and at the sight of the white siding that he and James and Jen had scraped and repainted at the beginning of summer, he had to swallow down the loss that he'd started to feel when he realized he was grieving for a son he might never see again.



"I'm just so impressed with what you're saying about the victimization of men."

He looked up at a second-story window and remembered waking, sweaty, from a nap on the day that this began, on the floor of the twins' upstairs room, where he'd gone to be alone, and hearing James say, "Dad, do you still need me to help, or can I go to Allen's with Mom and the girls and go riding?"

"They're going now?" Steiner had asked, feeling dislocated at finding himself on the floor of a room he usually visited only at the twins' bedtime. He had climbed up there after downing two beers in the August heat, and since he drank so seldom lately he had all but passed out. He and the family were back at their high-plains ranch for the summer, to get away from the silicon-chip firm on the Coast which Steiner partly owned, and he and James and a neighbor had been trying to start a tractor that Steiner wanted to use to cultivate trees—"to play farmer," as the neighbor said. Steiner and the neighbor had spent most of that hot August morning pulling the diesel tractor in ovals around the drive with a second tractor, getting it going for a while and then listening to it die, with James hooking and unhooking the drawbar chain and having to jump aside once in his nimble way when the neighbor missed the clutch and struck Steiner's big rear tires and merely bounced backward as the tractor stalled again.

Now Steiner strained to hear James's voice from that afternoon—the last time he'd heard him speak—and sensed that James had been at a distance, perhaps already heading downstairs, aware that Steiner was angry at the tractor, and might be short-tempered after the beer. James would sometimes come up to Steiner, take his hand, and say, "Dad, I forgive you," before Steiner realized he'd been harsh or unfair, but James wasn't a dogooder or tattletale: more a conscience.

Steiner had hoped to establish their home on this ranch and run his business from here, in order to spend more time with the children, as Jen had said he should. This last year he had been out of the office every month, travelling on consulting trips to Europe, and at the thought of all those jet-fuel-smelling 747s, Steiner was back on the floor of the twins' bedroom that August afternoon, reeking of the tractor fuel on his hands and clothes, and the beer on his breath. He felt caught off guard, laid low by the beer, and then he heard, as if James were standing above the spot where he lay, "I'll stay and help with the tractor if you want, Dad."

The memory of his response went through Steiner so wildly that he felt even more dislocated. What was it he'd said? "I don't care."

He realized Jen had spoken, and saw James rubbing the window on his side, impatient to get out. Steiner hurried over and opened the door, and James grabbed at the dash and the seat, trying to propel himself from the car. Steiner squatted at the boy's level and took his hands in his. "Be patient a minute, honey," he said. "Remember your belt?"

The boy's hair was as unruly as his, and the sandy-colored curl at its edges needed trimming. James's eyes were nearly covered by it, Steiner saw, and then they rested on him in a dull love. Steiner coughed and felt a hand on his shoulder. Jen was standing above him, smiling—wisps of hair lifting from her forehead in a wind Steiner hadn't noticed until now—and the sight of her somehow enabled him to understand that he could endure handling James in his helpless condition on home ground. The boy loved the ranch so much that his usual good health always appeared to get even better, once they were here; he seemed to grow an inch his first week back, each time. Careful of the boy's ribs, Steiner lifted James from the seat, turning him so his back rested on Steiner's stomach, and the heated weight of James against him had the effect of blocking the blood to his brain. His mind went blank.

James started pedalling his feet in a spinning run in place, and Jen laughed and shook her head. Then she glanced around the yard and off to a blue-shaded butte, as if to make the landscape hers again, and looked buoyant with the breath she took, then wiped at the corner of an eye. "You're so dear," she said to James, smiling down at him.

Wm Hamilton

"The cutting edge doesn't last forever."

• •

STEINER had spent the last week or so trying to decide if James's sense of humor was returning, as when a therapist had helped the boy down a ramp into the hospital pool for the first attempt at one of the forms of therapy a pediatrician had prescribed, and James, a natural swimmer, had become so excited at the sensation of water that he tried to run and fell with a splash. When the therapist and Jen, who got her skirt soaked, pulled him from the pool, James mimicked a hangdog look, and then, for the first time since the accident, he contrived a smile, wry and lopsided, that caused Steiner to laugh. James produced the same smile when he was on his next instrument of therapy—a stainless-steel tricycle—every time the therapist relaxed her control over the handlebars and he rammed it into a wall, reminding Steiner of the time a colleague from the East, a designer whose chips were as intricate as a gridwork of Manhattan, with each cornice and window in place in each building, was scheduled to arrive at the ranch and Steiner wanted to impress him with the comfort of the place. Steiner had been on the phone, trying to deal with a local plumber who had promised to check their failing sewage system but now was pretending he hadn't promised *when* he would, and Steiner tried to say, "But we must have a bathroom," and was only able to get out "But . . . But . . ." And when he hung up, James came hurrying past—nearly impossible now to recapture this dancing half run the boy performed with such agility—and said from the side of his mouth, "Is your butt broke, Dad?" Once Steiner had begun to grieve for the James he had known, the grief grew worse when he realized that in the last year or so it had been James, more than anyone, who had had the ability to cheer him.

Now Jen slid an arm between Steiner's stomach and James, passing the padded canvas belt around the boy's waist. She drew it snug, and then buckled him in. James's closed-head injury, as the doctors called it, was in the rear-left quadrant, so his right limbs weren't responding well, and the physical therapist had demonstrated to Steiner and Jen how to grip the belt from behind, in order to support James in his walking, which kept improving with his visits to the pool.

"Do you want to—" Steiner began,

but Jen already had the belt, and James went teetering off, with her in tow, past the front of the car, as if on a beeline toward the last moment he might have remembered—the tractor. Steiner's daughters went past with their hair streaming back, laughing at the speed of James's walk and at Jen's attempts to keep up. James was enamored of farm equipment, and the connection he might make to the person he'd been before, Steiner had thought through the hospital stay, was the tractor. Their neighbor had finally fixed it—a plugged fuel filter, he discovered—and had driven to the hospital to tell them this when James was still in the state the doctors called comatose, and Steiner was positive he had seen James respond.

So all through the hospital stay, Steiner kept telling James they would get the tractor going as soon as they got home. He was grateful to Jen now, though, that she had taken him away. Steiner tried again to hear James's voice asking to go to Allen's that afternoon, and then remembered waking a second time, after the family was gone from the house, to somebody calling his name—the neighbor who had been helping with the tractor. "Billy Allen's on the line," the man had said, and Steiner's first thought was *Something's happened to James.* The neighbor was in the kitchen, staring out at the tractor, Steiner saw as he went by, noticing the broken-open six-pack on the table.

"Yes?" he said into the receiver.

"Steiner," Billy Allen said. "Bad news. The kids was back from riding, unsaddling the horses—your wife was there, I wasn't—when my gelding, Apache, spooked, I guess, and went over the top of James. He's hurt. I don't know how bad, Steiner, but he ain't conscious yet." Allen's voice parted with fear at this. "I called the ambulance. We'll meet you at the hospital."

Steiner called right back, but the phone kept ringing. Billy Allen lived on a river-bottom ranch thirty miles off, and all summer had been asking the twins to come and ride, and Steiner's response had been "What's wrong with our horses?" until Jen said, "Surely you know that poor lonely old bachelor dotes on girls." So why did James go? Steiner almost yelled into the phone, which kept on ringing.

He drove to the hospital at a speed his pickup probably wouldn't recover from, trying not to picture the ways James might be injured. He had bought the six-pack on an errand in town—for his neighbor to enjoy in the heat, he told himself—but back home he cracked a can for himself, irritated at the damn tractor that had already cost him enough, and then looked down to see James staring up in sadness, prepared to forgive him. Then he recalled that he had told James on the trip to the ranch that he wasn't going to drink this summer, not even a beer—since lately drinking made him unpredictable. The image of James staring up—with Jen's beauty in his features—stayed in Steiner's mind throughout the twenty-some miles to the hospital, while he kept saying, "Please, please," meaning, Don't let his face be disfigured.

He beat the ambulance in. The nurse at the emergency desk, wearing an orange stopwatch on a cord around her neck, seemed the bulky focus of the world that was still stable. She said the ambulance had called in, and from

DIVINATION IN THE PARK

1
Under the bursting dogwoods et cetera,
having just finished a pear
for lunch, I lie over the earth
to feel it swim
inside my posture, and sleep,
while full-bellied women pole home
with small children,
and black waves fling
grappling hooks and grab by inches
the torn-off, uplifted rocks,
stranded offshore like apple trees in the fog.

2
Parts of the earth are slowly thawing.
Less than slowly, the groundwater
rises in the crevices
and exposed places
five strata down where the fossils are.
The winter was mild:
in the bulbs and empty hives
spring rubs the velvet
from its new brace of horn,
and around the drowning rocks
the feral light of equinox
sheds a pattern on the ocean.

3
To think that before this day,
of all the days,
I was less than a snake sunning
on a rock, but that now
I'm the lord of the serpents in the temple,
worshipped and adorned
in my eloquent lengths.
So what if I fail the test of time?
I cling to the earth as it
banks and glides. Miners
enter my abandoned skin
with strings of lights and diagrams;
gods on couches ring the horizon.

—Vijay Seshadri

• •

"I'm telling you, Harper, we're in the wrong business."

somewhere under the counter between them a radio crackled on and an amplified voice said something Steiner couldn't catch. Before he was able to ask the nurse anything, she picked up a microphone from under the counter, and said, "How is he?" A wash of static went through Steiner like a further form of anxiety, and again he couldn't make out a word.

The nurse studied him with set lips, appraising him, and said, "There are no marks on him, they say"—as if she knew what he needed to hear—"but he isn't conscious."

NOW Steiner saw James swerve toward the granary near the drive, with Jen keeping up and with one daughter holding James's hand and the other grabbing at her mother's skirt. The tractor sat in the unmowed grass ahead. Steiner turned from them into a flash like a press camera's—the mirror in the rear of the station wagon reflecting sun into his eyes. He leaned against the automobile, unable to stop this sequence that kept returning: the stretcher tilting from the ambulance, James's blue face against sheets, Jen squalling up in the station wagon and running over in riding denims, the girls running after her, and then the glass doors to the hospital springing open with a hiss; hearing this and the clattering of all the footsteps but no sound of a voice. Then the stretcher rolled close, and he could hear James going, "Ohhh, ohh," in shallow sighs. Jen embraced Steiner with an impact that set him off balance, and cried, "It's my fault!"

"No," Steiner said, holding her so hard that the snaps of her jacket dug into his chest. The stretcher paused, as if the ambulance attendants were waiting for a command, and Steiner turned, one arm still around Jen, and tried to locate James's hand under the blanket and discovered that James was strapped to some sort of hard-plastic carrier. Two swelling, padded curves gripped his jaw on each side, and straps were buckled across his forehead and near his neck.

"It's Dad, I'm here," Steiner said, and thought he heard a catch in James's breathing. *Good God*, he thought, and closed his eyes and understood that each "oh" from James was an attempt to cry out in pain, and felt that if he could enter James and bear this moment for him the boy would rise from the stretcher and walk away. Then the doctor, a French-Vietnamese who had taken over a local quarter-horse ranch, was in the midst of them, looking like a jockey in a torn red T-shirt, saying to an ambulance attendant, "You thought a spinal injury?"

He quickly undid the buckle near James's neck to help him breathe more freely, and the attendant said, "In case."

"Here," the doctor said, and grabbed the head of the stretcher and pulled it into a side room himself—as if to be free of the attendants—and over to an examining table. "Dad and Mom, here," he said, and when an attendant with a full beard attempted to block the door, he called, "No! I want them in here to help, answer questions! What's his name?"

"James."

"James! Can you hear me?"

James lay inert, expressionless, ivory, and beneath the overhead lights Steiner saw the boy's lips tugging with inner pain. The nurse helped the doctor slide James and the board onto the examining table, and the doctor probed his neck and skull and took a flashlight from the nurse and looked into James's eyes, drawing his lids high with a thumb, and then, with a tool, scraped the soles of both feet, hammered at James's knees and elbows, drew the tool up his sternum, and said, "Get upper X-rays, quick."

To Steiner he said, "I'm going to give him some oxygen through a nasal cannula here," already tearing open a sack. A coil of blue-tinted plastic fell from it over the boy's bare legs, pale and dirt-smeared. Why was he wearing shorts to ride? Steiner almost shouted, and felt a hand on his back. Billy Allen stood with a hat over his chest, chin trembling, and said, "I should have been there to help. Call my insurance company. Sue me." The elderly man looked almost in tears, and one of the ambulance attendants led him into the hall.

"That's all I can do," the doctor said. "I see head injury but no sign of it. He's not posing or putting on displays of extensive damage, but is comatose, you see. I'm running quick X-rays"—the machine above them clicked on, humming, and the doctor glanced at it and shrugged. "I'm sending him to the city hospital. You'll want all the attention he can—"

Steiner swooped for James, who had grabbed the side of the table to pull himself over, about to fall as Steiner got to him, and then, in a spasm that drew his knees near his chest, he gagged up watery stuff, then groaned and gagged up a dark spoonful the nurse caught in a stainless-steel bowl.

"Last meal?" the doctor asked.

"Lunch," Jen whispered, hoarse, and Steiner saw her on the other side, ducking the X-ray machine a technician was running on an overhead track, holding James's hand.

"Goodness," the doctor said. "Look at him empty his stomach—good response. We'll have to keep his lungs clear. I'm putting in a stomach tube. Catheter, too," he said to the nurse. He was already through a leg of James's shorts with glittering shears and clipping off his stained T-shirt.

"Test that," he said, to the nurse, nodding at the bowl. "Could be bloody-tinged. Maybe internal injuries," he whispered to Steiner. "I'm telling you straight. You see he doesn't respond in any normal way. Oh—a hoof got him." A curved ridge of torn skin lay under the stained T-shirt, and James's high arch of ribs was dented in. "Ribs," the doctor said to the technician. "Poor kid." Then to Steiner, "He'll be prepped for the ambulance."

"Let's call a helicopter," Steiner said, and everybody looked up, as if the shout he'd held back had emerged. He'd heard that helicopters were being used in this sparsely populated countryside to ferry people to city hospitals, and the thought of this had arrived in a jolt: *critical accident victim*.

"The ambulance is as fast, I bet," the doctor said. "And about as smooth a ride. I don't want him jarred too much till we get a CAT scan. His spine's O.K., I think. I'll get him ready and can just about guarantee he'll get to the hospital fine."

A silence came, and as Steiner waited for further reassurance he looked across at Jen and saw her head bowed over James's hand, which she held to her lips. "James!" she cried. "I know you can hear me!" The boy writhed; tubes were in his nostrils and one was in his mouth—hurriedly taped to his sleep-struck face—and this writhing seemed to be in resistance to the catheter the nurse was trying to insert; his hand swung at her.

"Good!" the doctor said, and took the tube from the nurse and tried himself, sweat running beneath his glasses until he whispered, "This is so hard with little boys," nearly in tears. "It's just that we got to have access to his functions. Oh, little guy. His heart is steady, good." A black-and-gray negative clopped into a white-lighted frame. "Oh," the doctor said, "four ribs, at least, in this first X-ray, but no lung puncture that I see. I can say for sure they'll get him there without a change."

"I'll ride in the ambulance!" Jen declared.

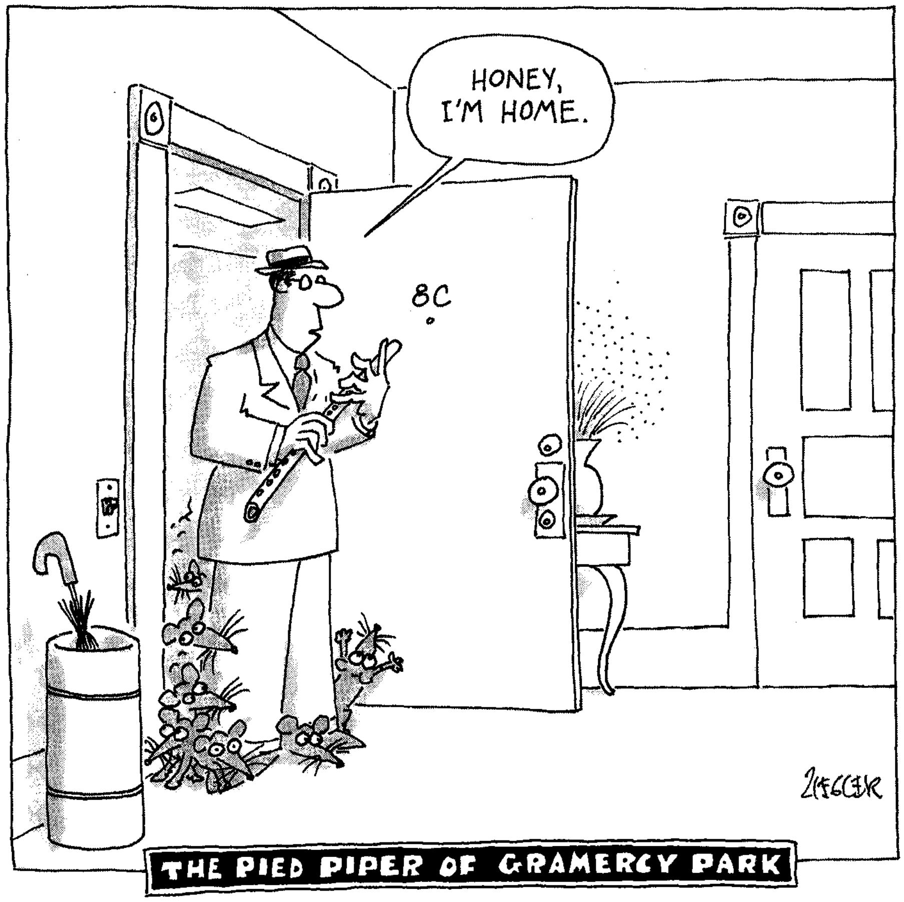
There were looks all around, and the doctor said, "I'm sorry—they have regulations. Is the driver here?"

"Me." A young fellow at the door in a baseball cap.

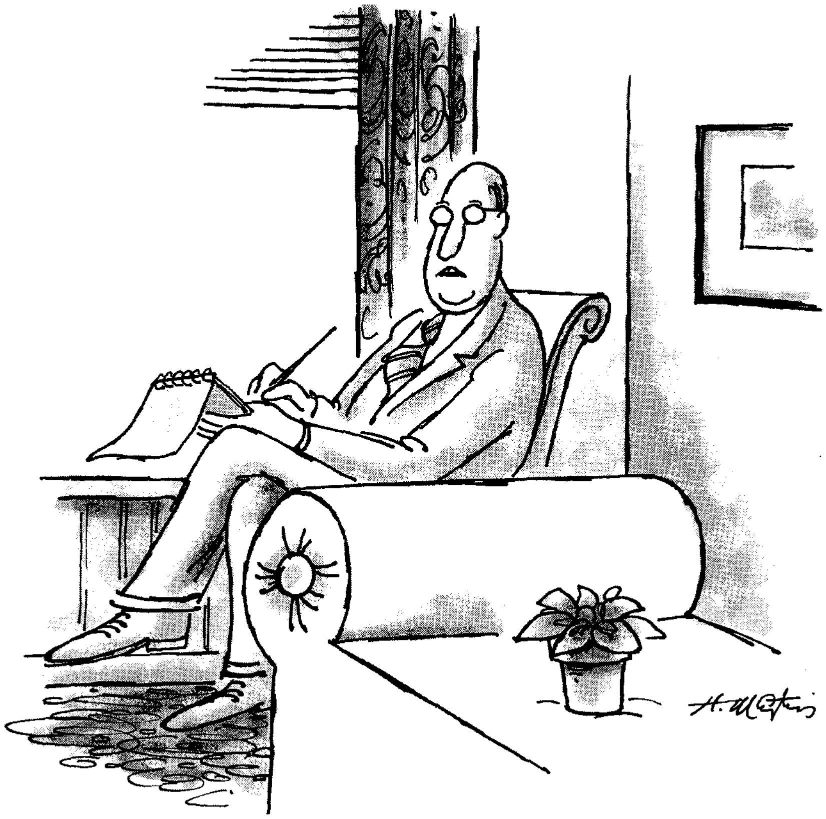
"Follow right behind," the doctor told Steiner, tucking a blanket around James. To an elderly nurse who was looking in from the hall, he said, "Ride along and keep him warm. And you," he said to the ambulance driver, "take it slow, easy over bumps, no use exceeding—play it safe."

It was the longest trip Steiner had ever endured, he felt, following at the ambulance's back, separated from James. But during it he heard the story from Jen. Billy Allen had been busy moving irrigation pipes, so he got the horses saddled and went back to work, and when they were done and had started to unsaddle, the horse James was riding, Apache, went wild, Jen said—all of this happening so fast she hardly had a chance to get the girls out of the way as Apache charged. She had been sure James was safe, because he'd been standing farther back, and then the horse spun, its saddle swinging to one side, and she heard a sound like a post struck and came around the corner where she'd taken cover and saw James, a ways from Apache, hit down.

"I knew right away he was terribly hurt. The horse went off to a fence, kicking at the saddle, and the worst part of it, I mean now, is that James was on his back trying to push himself up. He's that strong. His head came up, he tried to open his eyes, and then he sank back and I caught his head. I didn't think he'd breathe, I waited so long, I don't know how long, rubbing him and asking him to breathe—I felt I had to support his head—and finally he gasped."


HONEY, I'M HOME.
8C
THE PIED PIPER OF GRAMERCY PARK
ZIEGLER

STEINER saw that James had travelled past the tractor with his mother and was heading toward the pasture at the edge of the yard. The twins were going ahead through shaggy



"Do you think your failure to bloom could be caused not just by improper location but also by a fear of having your blooms compared with those of other African violets?"

grass that hadn't been mowed in weeks and reached to their hips, toward a garage that stood alone at a corner of the two-acre farmyard, the peak of its roof like a parody of the tepee buttes that rose above it—so hazy in the late-summer heat they seemed to simmer on the horizon like a mirage. Then Steiner saw where James was headed. At the end of the garage, on the other side of the pasture fence that from Steiner's distance was invisible, three of their quarter horses—a stately bay the size of a cavalry mount and a buckskin mare who seemed on a constant nervous search for the colt nudging up behind her—came ambling forward, all of them at attention, their heads and ears up. Then the bay whinnied in acknowledgment of the family he knew.

James was heading toward him.

He remembers, Steiner thought, his hair going back in the wind, and sat down in the seat where James had been sitting. Steiner had imagined taking a .30-30 to Allen's and dropping the rogue Apache. I still might, he thought, once James is— The second night at the hospital, while he stood watch in the intensive-care ward as Jen slept, he heard the beeps of James's heart monitor start to slow, and when he checked the digital display that printed out every half minute, he saw it read forty-six. At forty an alarm went off, and the nurse on duty, who was at a desk behind glass, looked up. It was a large ward, but James's bed was the only one in it, and the nurse glanced at the monitor on her desk and then shook her head as if to clear it. She was Steiner's age, responsible for supervising the student nurses, besides her I.C.U. duties, and Steiner understood by her response that she was overworked.

She came through the door into the ward, which was dimly lit by baseboard lights, and stood at the other side of James's bed. "Is our boy tired?" she whispered, and with the second sense Steiner was developing he realized that her concern for James exceeded medical limits; she had become personally involved. She was wearing slacks and a turtleneck—the informality on pediatrics disturbed Steiner; nobody wore white—and he could see her standing like this with her husband, the baseboard lights projecting their shadows on the ceiling above a son's bed. "Should his heartbeat be so slow?" he whispered, imagining James heard every word.

"Oh, he's a child," she said, recovering from whatever state she had slipped into. "It's surprising how low it can go in a kid. Did he use to run a lot?"

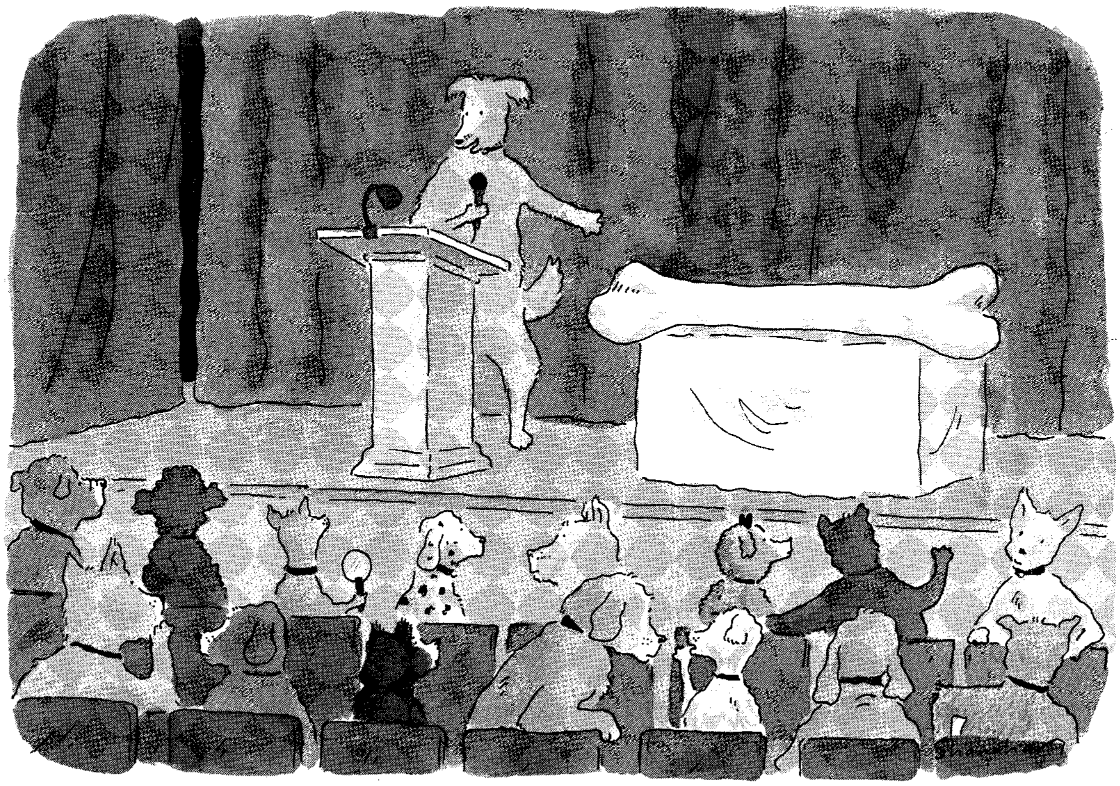
"Yes."

"If it was you or me, I'd be worried."

But when she went back to her desk he saw her turn aside to make a phone call. The next digital printout read thirty-five. At thirty Steiner saw her go to a refrigerator and prepare a syringe, and then he had to blink against the overhead lights she suddenly switched on. She walked in and looked down at James, her hands on her hips, detached and half angry, a nurse again, then strode back to her station.

Steiner put a hand on the far side of James and leaned over him. "James," he said, and couldn't say any more. Without any sign of injury, James looked more beautiful than ever, and all Steiner could do was stare down at him and take in every feature and inch of skin in case he never saw him alive again. He felt that he could see into James to the place he had retreated to, where his real self rested, hidden, and that he should call to him there. Then this seemed presumptuous, grandiose—as if it were in his power to call James back! His lips felt sealed. But if he, the boy's father, wouldn't make this effort, who would? "James," he said firmly, more severely than he'd intended, and with a skip the boy's heart rate on the monitor picked up again.

The neurologist was noncommittal, one neurosurgeon was hopeful, many of the physical therapists were hopeful, but the pediatrician overseeing James was pessimistic, given to scowling, and when James didn't fully wake from the coma after forty-eight hours, and seventy-two, and then four days, his scowl deepened. Wriggling a toothbrush mustache as he pursed and compressed his lips, he asked Steiner and Jen to "step with" him from James's bed, where they were sharing a shift. He sat them down in a lounge and said that since they hadn't seen any of the signs in James they were looking for, all of them had to face the worst: that



“Do I hear eighty-five?”

• •

James might not recover, or, if he did, he would have to undergo the most comprehensive therapy merely to restore his basic functions, which did not include—his mustache wriggled—vocal speech.

They tried to convince him that they had seen a change, that James’s eyes were open more often, that he seemed to respond to his name, that the head nurse had said she was sure he was following along when she read from a children’s book she held in front of him, and Jen brought up a theory she’d mentioned to Steiner—that James was such a perfectionist he wouldn’t speak until he could speak as he used to. No, the doctor insisted, they must not get their hopes up, that was why they were having this “counselling session.”

So Steiner got up and took Jen’s hand and walked off with her to a room the head nurse was letting them use for naps, and in a rawness of intimacy he wanted to have her on the spot but knew they must do something as parents. Then Jen said, “I want to hold him.”

They went into the hall hand-in-hand and hurried to the boy’s bed, like youngsters, escaping the pediatrician. Steiner helped Jen draw James from the bed, moving tubes and an I.V. stand, and into a rocker with her. James’s head dropped back, his lips apart and his eyes open, and he stared up at her with the distant look Steiner had seen in him when he rested in the crook of her arm as a nursing infant. Then James struggled to rise and put his arms around his mother’s neck.

The next morning as the pediatrician was doing his daily tests and called, “James, squeeze my finger!” he glanced at Steiner and Jen, eyes wide, and said, “Some grip!” Later that day James opened his mouth to speak and looked puzzled, then tried again, shifting his lips, and finally gave up. But from then his progress was fast. The next day he was transferred from intensive care and put on the course of therapy, and then Jen said it was time to go home. The pediatrician, who by now was less pessimistic, went so far as to say that Jen was doing more for James than most of the—his mustache bobbed—“care professionals.”

And now, away from that institution and under this expanse of sky, Steiner understood that though he may have thought the worst at times, and didn’t always know how to handle what was happening, there was a part of him that never doubted that James would recover. Which was what had helped him stay sane enough to be available to the boy. James’s recovery seemed an internal process, nearly separate from him and Jen, and they had been carried along by it, silent passengers, until it had brought them home.

So now Steiner drew himself from the seat and walked around the station wagon to watch James and Jen and his daughters at the fence. The horses were arching their necks down to them, and James leaned forward from the belt, his left hand up, and stroked the nose of the bay, then the skittish buckskin, who jerked back at his touch, checked for her colt, then came forward and nodded her head at him. His hand travelled over her face and muzzle, unsteadily at first, and then he assumed a courtly stance that he used to favor, and Steiner had a glimpse of the son who had always had a way with pardon, and thought, That’s enough. He had always wondered how parents with injured or diminished children were able to bear it. He pitied their patience and calm, but now he understood; it was enough to have the child with them, alive.

James turned, sensing Steiner’s eyes on him, and brought Jen swinging around as she held to his belt, and the horses wheeled away, heading down the hill toward the pasture. *Get back*, Steiner cried to himself. He could feel the battering of hooves from where he stood and imagined the weighty charge of Apache toward James, and then a gust of wind took his hair straight up and he saw James’s and Jen’s and the twins’ hair climb the air also, the girls’ high above their heads. And over the days and months afterward, when James had started talking, and travelling everywhere on a run, the sensation of that moment kept returning to Steiner—all of them suspended for a second against the horizon, silent in the wind.

—Larry Woiwode

A REPORTER AT LARGE

DEFICIT

THE Stadium of the Tenth Anniversary rises from the flatlands of Warsaw's Praga district. Late this past December, when I took to visiting the stadium, the iced-over playing field at its center and the hundred thousand seats on its interior slopes were regularly empty and chillingly windswept. All the action was occurring outside, for it was there that, day after day, tens of thousands of merchants and traders and smugglers and shoppers converged for the largest open market in Eastern Europe. The variety of goods offered for sale was astounding, but even more astounding was the variety of those doing the offering: Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Armenians, Afghans, Serbs, Croats, Romanians, Lithuanians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Gypsies, Kazakhs, Azerbaijanis, Uzbeks. There were Mongols hawking sheepskins and Chinese vending calendars and pocket calculators, North Koreans flogging jewelry and Vietnamese mongering shirts and leather jackets.

Some of the booths were wholesale operations—bales and bales of cellophane-wrapped knockoff jeans, for example, with busy entrepreneurs distributing calling cards in an effort to drum up more ambitious orders. (Items from the Warsaw stadium, I was told, quickly radiated to all the towns and villages of the former Eastern bloc.) Here and there, I came across a lone bedraggled peasant sitting on his battered suitcase, with a pathetic array of trinkets spread out across a grimy rag before him. The vast majority of sellers seemed to have come from the former Soviet Union, and they seemed to have brought with them everything they owned or could conceivably forage. After the Second World War, it had appeared to the Poles—with some justification—that every possession of theirs that was not physically battened down had been transported east as plunder by the Red Army forces going home. Now it all seemed to be coming back.

I saw Red Army gas masks, helmets, binoculars, infrared night-vision goggles, military medals. "Kalashnikov?" one vender whispered conspiratorially. I came upon bicycle chains, fur coats, fur caps, bonsai plants, Lenin busts and Virgin Mary icons, boxloads of Estée Lauder perfume, panoplies of porn, tuxedos and other formal wear, puppies, computer games, computers, waffle irons, checkerboards, lingerie, car-seat covers, lipsticks and eyeliners, Washington Redskins T-shirts, Gucci T-shirts, possibly real Reeboks as well as obviously fake ones, firecrackers, wire strippers, dubious telephones, circular-saw blades, surveyors' tripods, reindeer antlers, Mickey Mouse plastic molds, fishing tackle, rusty shovels, broken toys, packets of unlabelled medical tablets, towers of cigarette cartons, bottles of vodka, bottles of beer, bottles of a green syrupy goop that advertised itself as "Kiwi Juice," and bottles labelled "Fresh & Fruity Orange Drink," whose contents appeared anything but. There were pirated books and pirated videos and pirated audiocassettes. Pickpockets roamed the crowded paths, gruff rogues elaborated sinister cons, pimps rustled up business for teams of prostitutes crammed into trailers rimming the back lots.

What I saw around the stadium was, it seemed to me, an expression of capitalism in its purest form—not the raw nineteenth-century version that people kept alluding to, cringingly, in recent economic debates all over Poland but something still more primeval. This was the world of Braudel, the fifteenth-century trade fair, a teeming Brueghelscape. I said as much to the political columnist Konstanty Gebert one afternoon as we stood on the stadium's rim, surveying the swarming scene below. "Yes," he said. "Only, it was even more like that last year—remember?—when this market's forerunner spread itself across the parking lots under the Palace of Culture." He waved a hand toward the palace, a hideously camp wedding-cake structure on the other side of the Vistula River; Stalin's gift to the Poles, it still dominated the Warsaw skyline. "Over there, it was really uncanny—this vast medieval mart rising in the very shadow of that cathedral to a dead god, the money

"What's your policy regarding love?"

changers scurrying about trying to gauge the correct rate of exchange between, say, a Greek drachma and a Romanian leu."

He shook his head, and went on, "For that matter, this site has its own historical resonances, too. For one thing, we happen to be standing on top of the rubble of the Warsaw ghetto. The ghetto itself, of course, was over there, on the other side of the river, just beyond the Palace of Culture. But after the war they had to clear the rubble to make room to rebuild the city, so they transported all the debris to the nearest empty expanse, which happened to be right here. I mean, there's nothing offensive or immoral about it—they had to put it somewhere. It just happens that this is where they put it, and we're standing on it. Ten years later, they decided to build a mammoth stadium on the site to celebrate the tenth anniversary of their new regime, and they completed it just in time for the 1956 crisis, in which they were overthrown by Wladyslaw Gomulka and his initially reformist movement. Twelve years after that, in the latter days of Gomulka's increasingly rigid regime, this was the site of the martyrdom of the Polish Jan Palach." Palach was the Czech student who immolated himself in protest against the August, 1968, invasion of Prague by Soviet and other Warsaw Pact forces.

"Did you know that we had one, too?" Gebert asked. "He's not as well known, it's true, because they managed to hush his story up pretty thoroughly. But it happened right down there." Gebert had turned around and was pointing to a corner of the stadium bleachers. "It was just a few weeks after the invasion, during the Festival of the Harvest, and the stadium was filled with more than a hundred thousand celebrators who'd been bused in from all over. While they were watching two model peasants present Gomulka with the first bread of the season, as was done every year—in the midst of all this pomp and pageantry—suddenly, off in the corner there, this little conflagration flared up, almost unnoticed. Someone happened to capture it on film, but the footage was impounded, and it resurfaced only recently. A fascinating documentary has been made about the whole incident, and it all happened right down there."

Gebert made a sweeping gesture that took in the entire stadium. "And, then, of course, this was the site of John Paul's huge open-air Mass in 1983, in the middle of martial law," he said. "Hour after hour, the multitudes came tramping over the Poniatowski Bridge, down there—came organized by parishes, completely disciplined, streaming toward the stadium. And hour after hour, just before they crossed, they passed in front of the Communist Party's Central Committee Building—see it over there?—chanting, in unison, at the top of their lungs, 'We forgive you, we forgive you!' The contempt with which they said it—as if to say, 'You're nothing, we don't even hate you.' You just knew the Communists were never going to stand a chance. Now the building houses the central bank and the stock exchange."

The whole time Gebert was talking, the stadium public-address system had been crackling in the background with an endless series of announcements and advertisements. "Happy Birthday to Hektor from all your friends in Sector 28," the staticky voice now proclaimed.

"And that's funny, too," Gebert commented. "You know whose voice that is? Recognize it? That's Andrzej Raclawicki. He and his buddy Krzysztof Bartnicki have two of the most recognizable voices in Poland. They were news announcers during martial law. Lost their jobs and ended up landing this incredibly lucrative concession as the stadium's d.j.s. So, you see, it's all layers—layers upon layers."

Another day, I visited the stadium in the company of the filmmaker Piotr Bikont, and he began regaling me with stories of his own recent adventures in the former Soviet Union, where he had gone to film a documentary on Kazakhstan. Returning from Alma-Ata to Moscow, he told me, he had discovered that the ticket on his connecting flight to Warsaw had been

THE LARGE STUDIO

It's one thing to get them to admit it,
quite another to get soap in your eye.
As long as I can remember I have been cared for,
stricken, like that. No one seems to scold.

I have had so many identity crises
in the last fifty years you wouldn't believe it.
Suffice it to say I am well,
if you like peacock's feathers on pianos
and cars racing their motors,
waiting for dates who never get done with doing their hair.
There have been so many velocipedes, millipedes,
and other words that I'm token senseless.
Just bring me one more drop of the elixir:
that's all I ask.

But when you saw how many colors things come in
it was going to be a long rest of the day.
"Enjoy your afternoon," he said, and it was roses
that you never get enough of and they make you sick.

It was kind of a cable
from which depended seven-branched candelabra
and feathers on the pine trunks
in that witch wood where nobody was supposed to stay—
say, do you think I could? Smell the roses?
Live like it was time?

Lo, it is time.
He raised the horn to his lips.
Such an abundance of—do you mind if I stay,
stay overnight? For the plot of a morrow
is needed to sort out the pegs in, meanwhile enough of me

• •

lasts to give us the old semblance of a staring, naked truth,
with drinks, that we wanted, right?
And because a gray dustman slips by
unnoticed, a thousand cathartic things begin to happen.
Only we know nothing of these. Nothing can take their place.

Today I squeezed a few more drops of color,
hoping to blot you out, your face I mean, and then this
extraordinarily tall caller asked if this was something I usually did.
Do I work against the plait often?
And sure, his boots were the right size. I replaced
my little brush and with it the thought of your coming
to absent me after dust and bougainvillea had chimed.
The answer was a nut.

And then there are so many harridans all over
the wall one is encouraged not toward a strict accounting
of all that is taking place, and we have washed, we are nice
for now. And the bowsprit (a word
I have never understood) comes undone, comes all over me, washes
my pure identity from me—help! In the meantime your friend has tunnelled
even as far as us, and it gets to be cold and damp
because the days are no longer making sense, are coming unlocked
in the tin aviary where we pinned them, and no one

right now has any good to say about what temperature
clashes with what other kind statistic we were all against
when it came out but who remembers that now?
Who was even engaged when we first thought of that?

I'll bite your toes, see you in the morning.
Place the canopy on that old chest,
allowing for a few grunts and drizzles, please,
and not another word of what you spoke to your father.

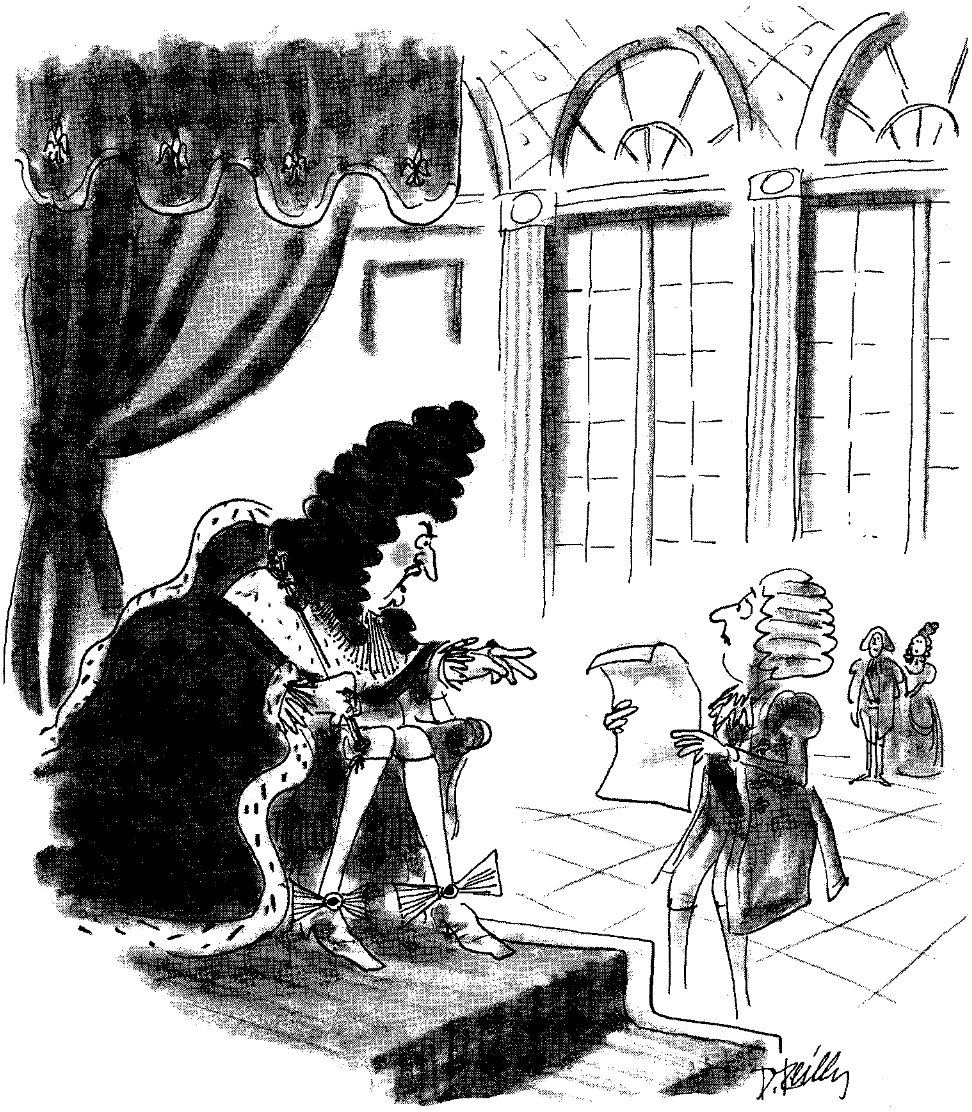
—John Ashbery

• •

cancelled. (These days, well over forty per cent of Aeroflot's regularly scheduled flights are cancelled for lack of fuel.) He managed to rush over to the central station just in time to catch the Moscow-Warsaw night train. "And this ride was incredible," he said, his eyes widening. "A phantasmagoria! A true Walpurgisnacht! The train departs in the afternoon, and as evening comes the Poles and the Russians converge, from their separate compartments, on the dining car—a staggering array of smugglers and brigands and shady types of all sorts. Soon, they take to strutting and carousing and drinking one another under the table. The hours pass, and at a certain moment, out of nowhere, women appear, prostitutes and semi-prostitutes, and one by one couples peel off down the corridors, returning singly a bit later for more drink and bravado. Then, a bit after that—it's now deep, deep into the night—several of the more beefy Russian guys take to gazing expectantly out the windows at the endlessly flat, snow-covered terrain, and suddenly, as if on cue, they all heave themselves up from behind their tables and stalk off toward the Russian cars. There they barge into one sleeping compartment after another, growling at the startled and terrified occupants that they'd better just stay put, or else! Then they yank open the windows and proceed to toss every suitcase, package, purse, or unattached bundle out of the train. Five seconds, ten seconds—bam! And then on to the next compartment, same thing. Apparently, they have their confederates out there along this particular stretch of railway, and the thefts take place regularly every night."

It occurred to me later, wandering about the stadium market, that many of the stalls might well be filled with stolen merchandise of this type. And yet, as I gradually learned, rail transit was still much to be preferred to the most common alternative: travel by truck or bus or automobile. By late 1991, the jams along Poland's post-Soviet borders were becoming almost inconceivable. Warsaw papers often reported lines of up to six miles, necessitating waits of over two weeks to clear customs. Travellers were being forced to stay with their cars twenty-four hours a day, not only to protect the cars and their contents but also to be ready to inch them lurchingly forward—all this in the dead of winter, in the middle of nowhere, with no facilities like grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, or even lavatories, anywhere at hand.

"The problem is all on the Soviet side," Ryszard Kapuscinski, Poland's renowned international correspondent, told me over lunch one day. (Kapuscinski's latest book project concerns the collapse of the Soviet empire, so he has been spending a lot of time over there lately.) "The Poles are only too happy to let people through in both directions, as part of their aggressive policy of open trade. But on the Soviet side it has all degenerated into a game of mafias. The customs officials are, of course, a mafia, but then so are most of their victims. Nobody normal would subject himself to such tribulations. The whole business is aggravated by the fact that, in pure Stalinist style, all roads leading out of the Soviet Union narrow to a single lane as they approach the border, for reasons of security. And, in pure Stalinist style, the guards work a minimum amount each day. They arrive at eight, brew some tea, change into their uniforms, come out, deal with a few cars, take a break, break again for lunch, close shop unaccountably, open again for a few more cars, leave promptly at five. Attempts have been made at high government levels to smooth the process, but the Moscow authorities say that this is all going on in Ukraine and they no longer have control over Ukraine, and the Kiev authorities say that the customs officials are actually still under the control of Moscow, and the truth is they're both right and they're both wrong, because in fact neither has any control over them. By now, the customs officials are operating as completely free agents, exacting arbitrary tolls without appeal and for themselves alone. They peer into the car, size up the situation, and state a price—ten dollars, fifty dollars,



"Why, that's ridiculous! I never said, in so many words, 'L'état, c'est moi!'"

• •

whatever—and that's it. What are you going to do—object? Go to the end of the line?"

Kapuscinski, who is a true connoisseur of border crossings, went on, "It's better going the other way. I mean, if you've got the right papers you can leave Warsaw early in the morning—5 A.M., say—and, allowing for an hour's wait at the border, still make it to Moscow late that night. It's a bit over seven hundred miles. It's best to travel in convoy, though. It's not wise these days to attempt such a trip solo. I had a friend who did a while back. He was speeding along on a stretch of highway somewhere in Byelorussia, and suddenly his windshield was shattered by a bullet. He himself hadn't been hit, and, fortunately, he had the good sense not to pull over and assess the damage. That's what they were trying to get him to do, so they could come out and fleece him. He floored the accelerator, knocked the broken glass out with his fist, and sped on. Half a mile down the road, his back window was shot out. But that's what it's like, that's how things have become on the other side of the frontier."

I began to realize that every merchant at the stadium must have a similar tale to tell. And, indeed, I heard a few variations—one from a tall, gangling young Ukrainian who told me how he had saved and saved enough hard currency to bribe his way onto the Kiev-Minsk-Warsaw train, how he had gathered together his store of trinkets and set out one day, only to be stopped at a previously nonexistent Ukrainian-Byelorussian border and ordered off the train by a previously unheard-of Byelorussian customs officer. "You're a Ukrainian—use your own Polish border!" the officer said. "The Byelorussian-Polish border is for Byelorussians only!" This Ukrainian had been forced to return to Kiev and start scrounging around all over again for another bribe's worth of hard currency.

During my stay in Warsaw, I made several visits to the stadium mart, and then suddenly it was all over. On January 2nd, the leaders in Moscow launched a shock-transition program to stabilize the economy, the leaders in Kiev and Minsk followed suit, and both the rationale for the stadium mart and its practical undergirdings quickly disappeared. The point had been that one could save up to buy a case of perfume, say, or a few toasters, or a box of light bulbs, or a packet of aspirins in Moscow, paying in rubles—next to nothing at the true hard-currency rates—and smuggle the stuff into Poland and sell it for zlotys or dollars or marks, but for considerably fewer than the local suppliers were charging, and, even after shaving off all the requisite bribes and tributes, end up making enough of a killing so that the exercise was worthwhile. If one lacked the money for an initial investment, it made sense just to sell one's own toaster or aspirin packet under such conditions, so advantageous was the soft-to-hard-currency differential. (This, of course, is precisely what the Poles themselves were doing just three years before, when they made frantic junkets to West Berlin.) Now, overnight, that differential had ceased to exist. Prices in Moscow were ballooning toward world rates: toasters were quickly costing almost as much in Moscow as they did in Warsaw, which is to say more than most people in either place could afford. So what, any longer, was the point of the whole exercise? Besides, train and bus fares and gasoline prices had also skyrocketed, so hardly anyone could afford to make the trip. The Warsaw daily

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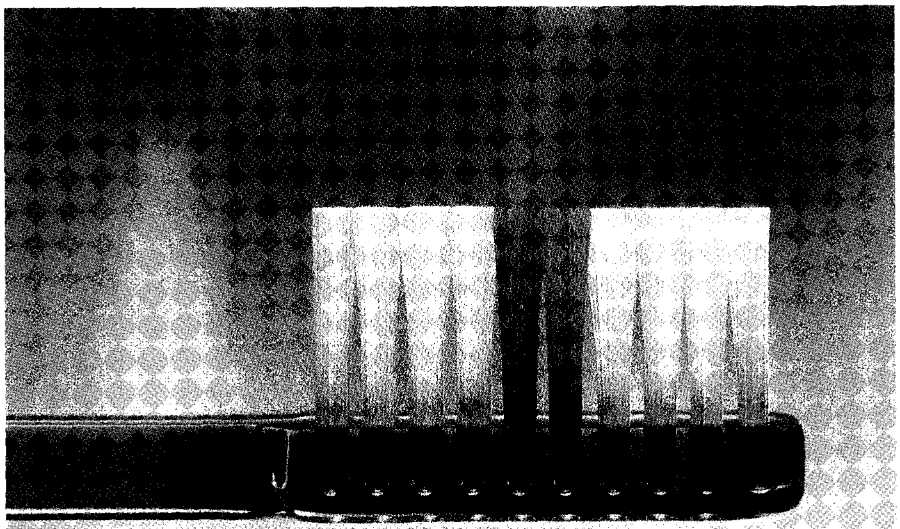

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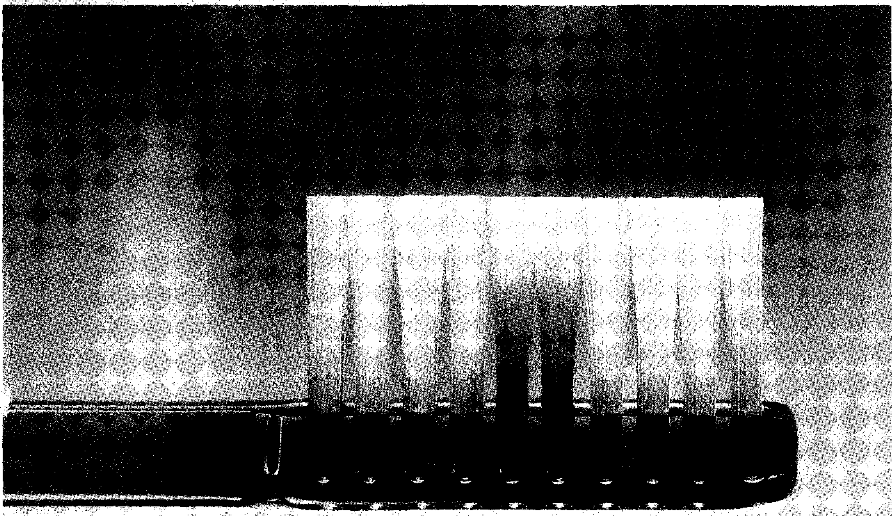

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(when dentists recommend replacing your toothbrush)

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Gazeta was reporting that trains were arriving from Moscow and St. Petersburg virtually empty, and that suddenly the waiting room in Warsaw's central station was eerily bereft of Soviets.

The Polish merchants at the stadium were almost panic-stricken, for, as several explained to a *Gazeta* correspondent, the Soviets hadn't been merely selling their wares; often they had translated the resultant hard-currency earnings into such impossible-to-find tangibles as bluejeans and shoes and sweaters, taking them home for resale and thereby further boosting their profits. The Polish merchants specializing in such items had been catering almost exclusively to a Soviet clientele, and now that market had collapsed. Many Polish consumers, meanwhile, had been managing to get by on the basis of the Soviet-smuggled goods or the lowering of prices for domestic products which the presence of those goods had brought about, and now it looked as if prices were going to be rising across the board. Still, the prospect of stabilized real-world prices in the former Soviet Union tended at the same time to heighten hopes for eventually increased real-world trade between, say, Lodz textile plants and the Kiev clothing factories they once supplied, and hence, perhaps, for increased Polish reëmployment as well.

"That all presupposes," one economist told me, "that the Russians and the Ukrainians, and so forth, are in fact going to be able to stabilize their currencies over the long haul—a proposition that is by no means obvious—and, for that matter, that we in Poland, even with our deficit pressures, and so forth, are going to be able to sustain the stability of the zloty." No single thing in the former Eastern bloc is entirely stable these days, and the relations between any two things are all the less so.

MANY of those wondering about the Russian shock transition's long-term prospects for success were taking a good hard look at Poland this past winter. Although the extent and the complexity of the economic calamity facing the Russians in January of 1992 were considerably greater than what had been facing the Poles back in January of 1990, the course of therapy that Russia embarked upon was almost identical to that undertaken earlier by Poland—as, indeed, were several of the consulting therapists, notably including the team surrounding the Harvard professor Jeffrey Sachs—and it was thought that the program's fate in Poland might provide some sort of clue to its eventual chances in the former Soviet Union.

In this regard, as in many others, Poland this winter presented a decidedly mixed picture. Before I arrived, I'd read a lot about the deepening economic crisis facing Poland's new government—the government that came into being when October elections to the Sejm, or parliament, brought an end to a sequence of regimes that had been united largely by the continuing presence at the country's economic helm of the Polish shock transition's principal author and mastermind, Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz—but the crisis was not immediately apparent to a casual visitor to Warsaw and some of Poland's other large cities. For one thing, the big cities in general seemed to be doing better than smaller towns and the countryside. (Then again, Lodz, Poland's second-largest city, seventy-five miles southwest of Warsaw, was doing considerably worse, mainly because of the collapse of a textile-based economy that used to be largely pitched to that of the Soviet Union.) Particularly when compared with where things seemed to be heading in the fall of 1989, when the oppositionist forces first wrested control from the Communists (or, perhaps more accurately, had such control thrust upon them), the economy this past winter seemed to be doing relatively well. "Back in 1988, everybody's fondest dream was even to be able to locate a roll of toilet paper—people forget that," Adam Michnik, one of the Communist regime's foremost dissident critics, who is now the editor-in-chief of *Gazeta*, recalled. "We were facing disastrous hyperinflation. Those with misgivings about the Balcerowicz Plan should be required to board a bus and go visit Moscow to see how things could have turned out if we hadn't acted decisively when we did."

The zloty has remained remarkably stable throughout the transition—thanks in large part to hard work at the level of the ministries and the central bank—and it continues to be, to all intents and purposes, a readily convertible instrument, making possible all sorts of initiatives in trade and investment.

Inflation, while it is still high—at sixty per cent annually for 1991—is nowhere near the two thousand per cent of a few years back. Stores are abundantly stocked with good products, which are attractively displayed. Even if prices have shot beyond the everyday reach of most consumers, shopping has been made pleasanter for everybody, and especially for Polish women, who are no longer faced with long lines and endless scheming in order to put even rudimentary meals on the table. The so-called small-scale privatization of storefronts and kiosks has proceeded dramatically, and has created a real sense of vigor and dynamism in the market. There are restaurants everywhere, of all kinds: Italian, Vietnamese, Arabic; British-style pubs; French haute cuisine.

Warsaw's main drag, Nowy Swiat (New World), features luxury boutiques that can hold their own against those in any other world capital. Throughout the country, more than half a million small businesses were started from scratch between December of 1989 and December of 1991, and though some failed, many managed to gain a toehold, often moving quite quickly from curbside suitcases into rickety shacks and then into more and more commodious storefronts. The number of persons employed in the urban, nonagricultural private sector jumped from 1.4 million in 1989 to 2.6 million in 1991. Some economy-watchers complain that much of this upsurge has occurred not in any sort of productive manufacturing but, rather, in the area of trade—and, specifically, in the kind of mad, finagling, marginal, and often speculative activity known throughout Eastern Europe as *Handel*. Others, though, maintain that if such trading practices have served to reduce the price of any given item by, say, ten per cent, surely that constitutes as valuable a contribution to the economy as an equivalent increase in productivity. In any event, Polish manufacturing wasn't entirely quiescent; in fact, Polish hard-currency exports, mostly to the West, registered an increase from just over eight billion dollars' worth in 1988 to just over fourteen billion dollars' worth three years later.

The West, for its part, was reciprocating with increasing numbers of large-scale investments in Poland. Last year, Levi Strauss & Company, for example, returned to its Central Euro-

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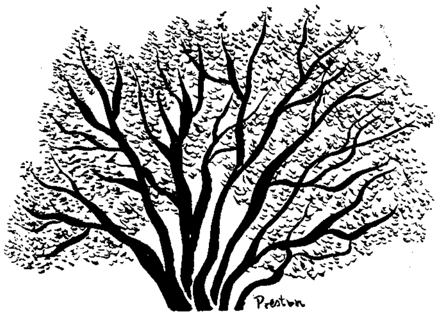
pean roots (almost a hundred and fifty years after Levi Strauss himself left Bavaria and settled in gold-rush San Francisco), launching a new, twenty-million-dollar jeans-making operation in the town of Plock, northwest of Warsaw. (The company had first attempted to do so in Lodz but had encountered widespread hostility there. Poles are quite ambivalent on the question of foreign investment: they long for both the money and the vote of confidence, but they don't want to start feeling like slaves of foreign masters, and they're terribly touchy about the notion of selling off the country's patrimony at the rock-bottom prices currently being offered.) And Levi Strauss & Company was by no means alone: Fiat, in 1991, and, more recently, General Motors also announced major new commitments.

All this, however, has been occurring within the context of a steep and seemingly unrelenting recession. Just how steep is a matter of considerable controversy, and statistics can be and are being marshalled to support virtually every contention. By far the greater part of Poland's economy remains in the state sector (it accounts for more than three-quarters of the country's industrial production, and last year employed more than eleven million of Poland's total population of thirty-eight million), and that sector has been devastated. Ryszard Bugaj, a longtime oppositionist economist and a persistent critic of the shock program undertaken in January of 1990 by his former colleagues, told me, "Our over-all economic production since November of 1989 is down forty-five per cent—the figure includes private industrial production. If you look at figures for the gross domestic product using 1988 as a base, by the end of 1992 we'll be down something like twenty-five per cent." The shock transition's proponents find productivity figures like these extremely misleading. They argue that, for one thing, the pre-transition figures were bloated by all kinds of useless and wasteful production, and that if some of that has disappeared so much the better; they contend, furthermore, that the current productivity figures don't properly factor in the so-called gray economy, the statistically invisible off-the-books transactions that were and still are so much of the reality of Polish daily existence. If Poland were truly facing declines of that magnitude, they say, the country would be afflicted with mass starvation and people would be rioting in the streets, and neither of these things is happening. To the extent that the transition's defenders are willing to grant that there has been some drop in real production, they insist it's not the fault of the shock transition itself but the fault of the complete collapse of the former Soviet trading bloc—specifically, the disintegration of Poland's two main pre-1989 trading relationships, with the Soviet Union and with East Germany. This has meant that particular sectors of the economy and particular industries and regions have indeed been hard hit.

A similar debate surrounds the interpretation of the growing unemployment figures. Officially, there was no unemployment in Poland during the Communist era, but nobody believes that: the economy was saturated with underemployment and meaningless make-work disguised as employment. In any case, by the fall of 1991 more than two million Poles were listed as unemployed; that is, more than ten per cent of the country's economically active population had registered to receive unemployment benefits, and the figure was steadily rising. But nobody knew quite what to make of those figures, either. There was considerable anecdotal evidence of occasional large-scale job postings that had met with a surprisingly lackadaisical response. Some observers suggested that unemployment benefits were pegged too high, and the jobless therefore had little incentive to seek new work. Others suggested that some of the jobless had in fact already taken new jobs, but off the books, since it was in neither their nor their tax-paying employers' interest to notify the state employment office of their change in status. And it was also true that the state had not yet imposed any full-scale plant closings, and everyone was expecting considerably higher figures later this year.

Proponents of the recent reforms, instead of looking at particular productivity or employment figures, maintain that the proper measure of the economy's health ought to be things like real wages, standard of living, and consumption. The trouble is that the statistics in these areas are as confusing as the statistics everywhere else. For example, according to one set of figures the average real wage in Poland, measured in dollars, went from fifty dollars a month in 1987 to two hundred dollars now—a fourfold increase. At the same time, however, there have been similar and sometimes far higher increases in the cost of average household expenses. (It's hard to make precise measurements, because earlier expenditures were often made on the black market, at higher than official rates, or else after long waits in line, the costs of which need to be accounted for somehow.) According to the government's main statistical office, the cost of living for Polish families during the first three quarters of 1990 was ten or eleven times what it had been during the same period the year before. Food ended up amounting to fifty to sixty per cent of total expenses, thereby diminishing the average sum available for spending on other commodities, such as shoes and clothing; and, indeed, sales of both shoes and clothing are down by half. (Some economists cast even the handsome export figures in this dim light: naturally, Polish companies have been scrambling to export their goods, these people say, because no one inside Poland can afford to buy them anymore and the companies have been desperate to find alternative markets.) Confusion gets compounded, however, when the same statistical office releases further sets of statistics, which seem to belie the first entirely. A survey of the acquisition of consumer durables, for instance, suggested that while fifty workers per hundred owned color televisions in 1989, by 1990 sixty-seven did; while only five out of a hundred had VCRs in 1989, this figure had soared to more than twenty a year later; and ownership of cars went from less than thirty-one per hundred to more than thirty-three during the same period.



IT is hard to know what to make of this utterly unregulated free market in competing statistics, but, walking around and trying to get a feel for the texture of people's lives and con-

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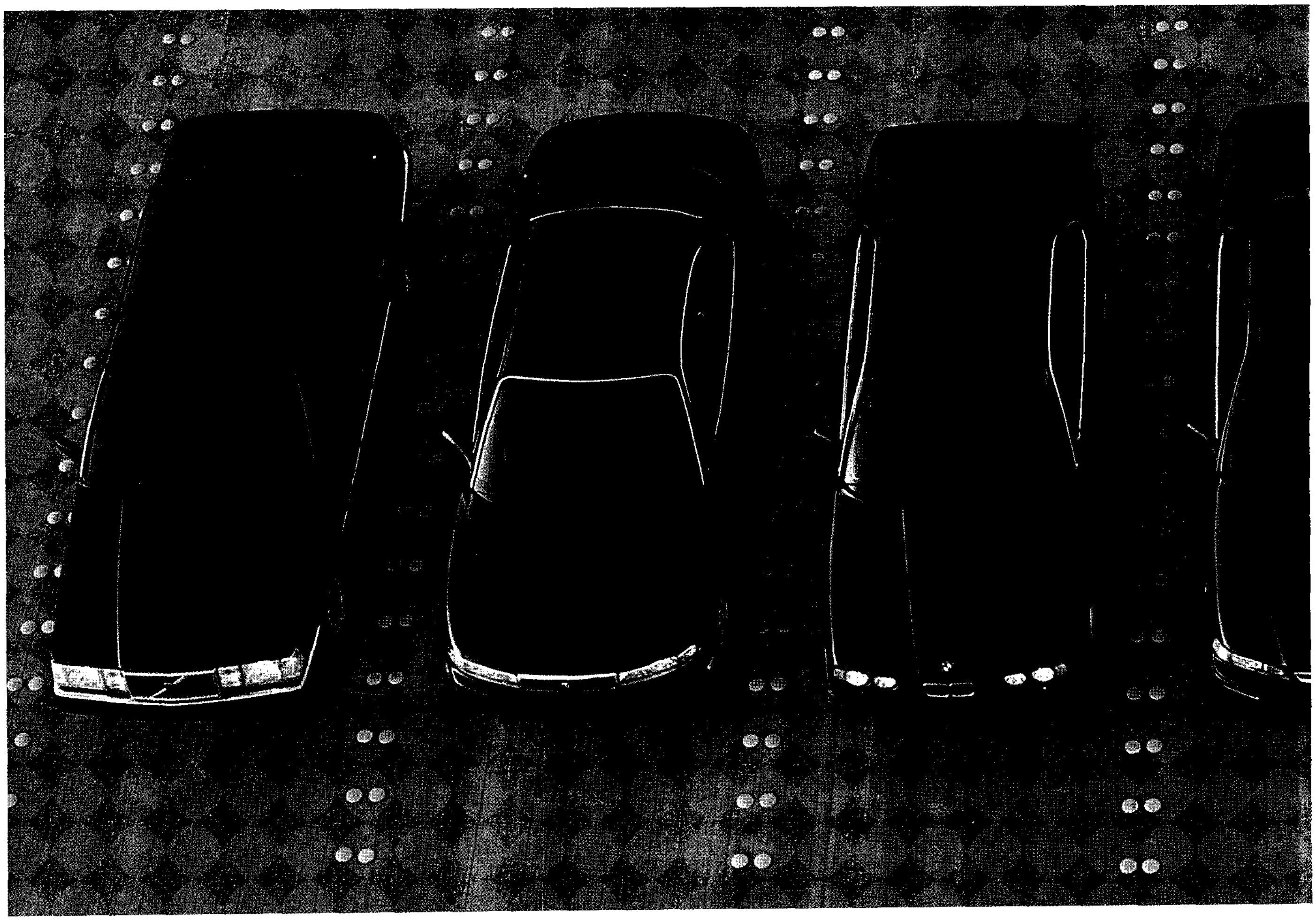

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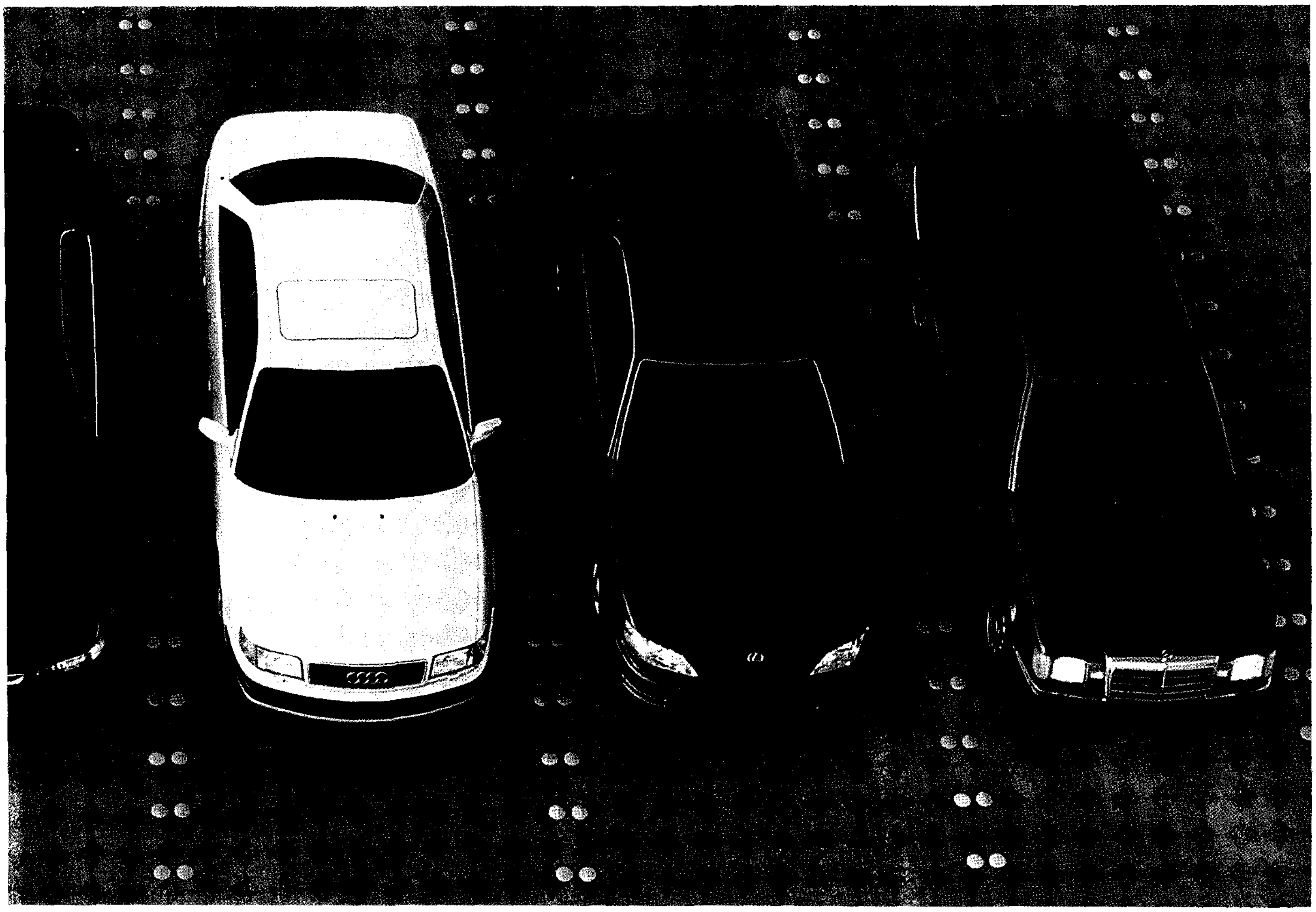

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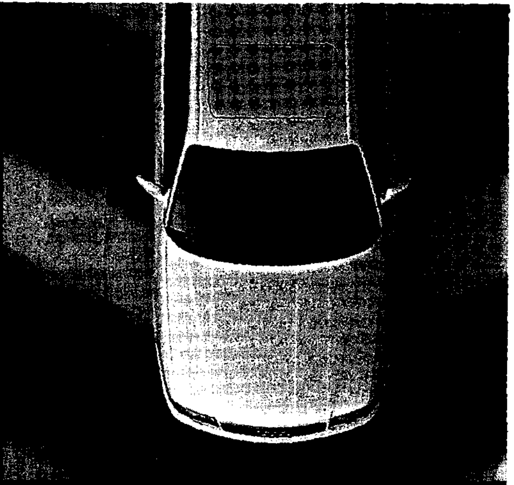
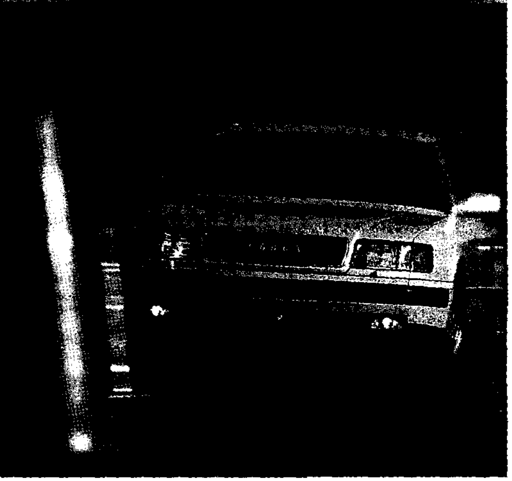
1 DRY CORNERING



2 DRY BRAKING

6 WET CORNERING



7 DRY SLALOM

THE EVENT:

THE INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION'S DECATHLON OF PERFORMANCE AND CONTROL.

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3 WET BRAKING

4 BODY ROLL

5 BRAKE PITCH

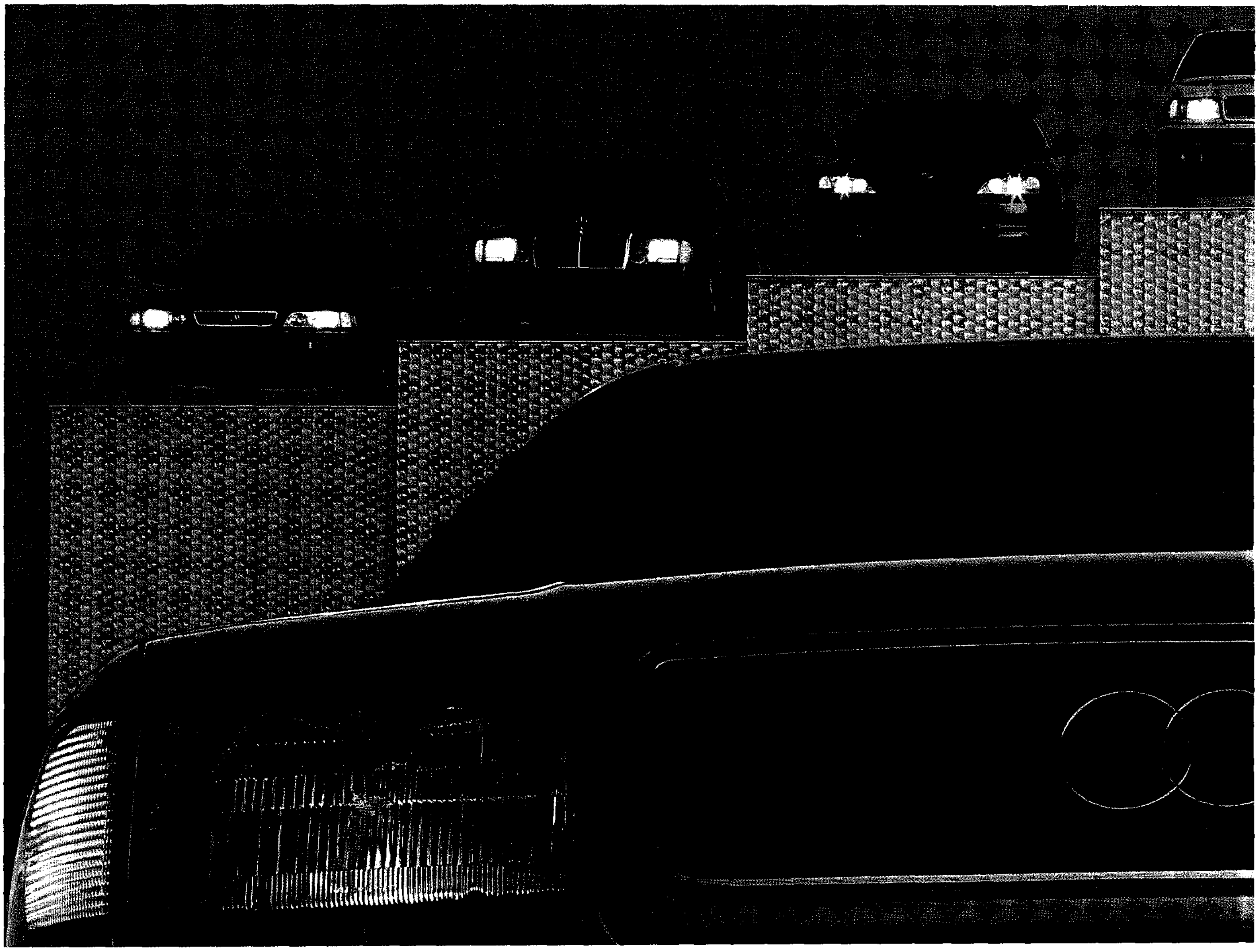
8 WET SLALOM

9 0-60 ACCELERATION

10 40-65 PASSING

TEN EVENTS. SEVEN CARS. ONE WINNER.

EVENT	1. Dry Cornering	2. Dry Braking	3. Wet Braking	4. Body Roll	5. Brake Pitch	6. Wet Cornering	7. Dry Slalom	8. Wet Slalom	9. 0-60 Acceleration	10. 40-65 Passing
1ST	Audi 100CS	Mazda 929	Audi 100CS	Audi 100CS	BMW 525i	Lexus ES 300	Audi 100CS	Audi 100CS	Acura Legend	Acura Legend
2ND	BMW 525i	Audi 100CS	Mazda 929	BMW 525i	Acura Legend	Volvo 960	Lexus ES 300	BMW 525i	Lexus ES 300	Lexus ES 300
3RD	Mazda 929	Mercedes 300E 2.6	Mercedes 300E 2.6	Mazda 929	Mazda 929	Mercedes 300E 2.6	BMW 525i	Lexus ES 300	Volvo 960	Audi 100CS



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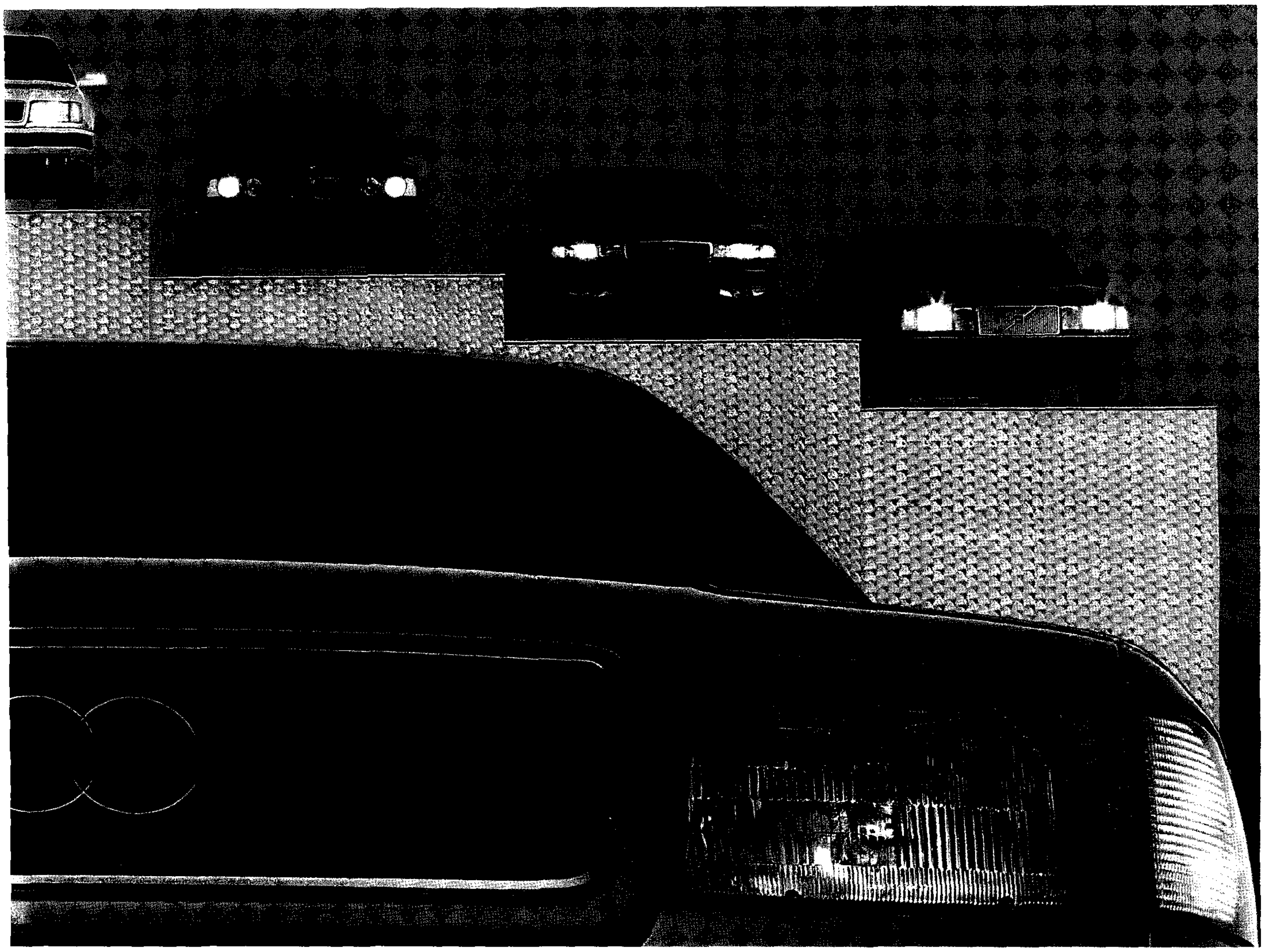
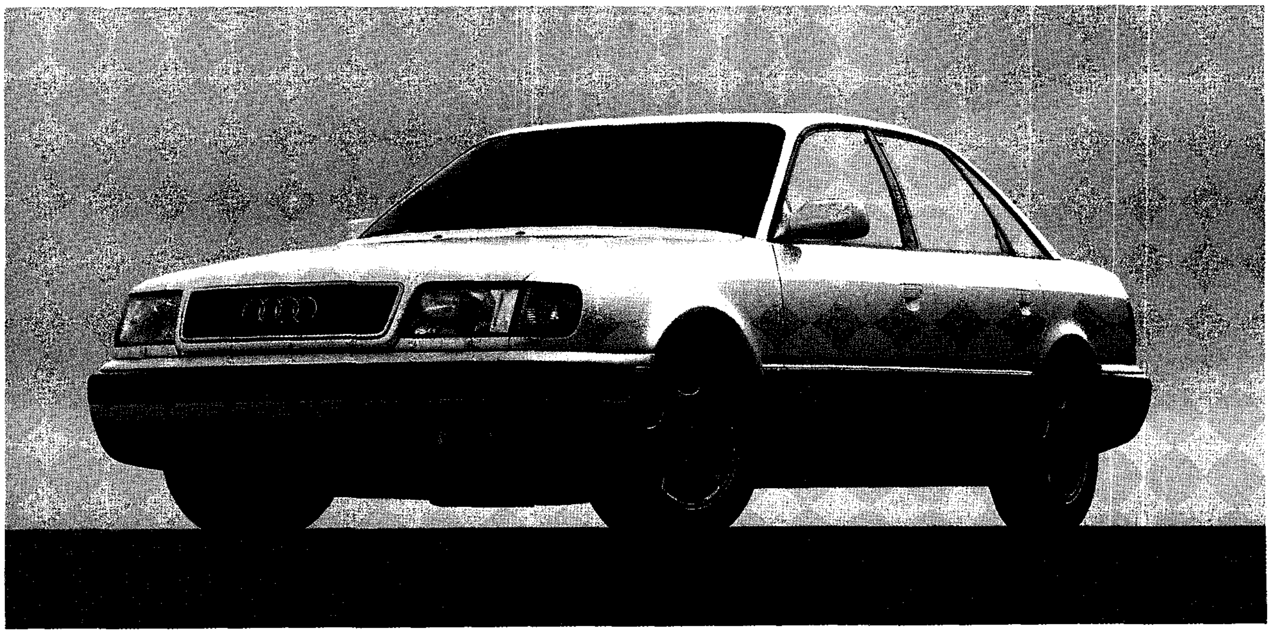


THE RESULTS	
AUDI 100 CS	56.5
LEXUS ES 300	44.5
BMW 525i	43.0
MAZDA 929	36.5
MERCEDES-BENZ 300E 2.6	34.5
ACURA LEGEND	32.5
VOLVO 960	32.5

THE INCENTIVE:

THE AUDI ADVANTAGE AND
THREE-YEAR TEST DRIVE.



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cerns, I came away with a few strong impressions.

The first was one of widespread and growing resentment over an obviously increasing polarization of wealth. It is undoubtedly the case that many people are doing very well these days, and there is a new, ostentatious cult of wealth, which seriously grates on the many more who are not doing so well. (The statistics in general get skewed upward by the success of those at the top: omit the top ten per cent, say, and the figures for the Polish recession would appear far starker.) The mouth-watering restaurant reviews in various Polish dailies "read like science fiction to most people," one man told me. Public institutions are progressively deteriorating, while some people seem able to levitate above the general dilapidation.

I myself can testify that Warsaw's telephone system is in considerably worse shape now than it was a year ago—not to speak of ten years ago, when you could count on getting through to at least the "*Rozmowa kontrolowana*" ("This call is being monitored") tape. Lines are regularly busy, but a busy signal doesn't necessarily mean that the receiver on the other end is engaged. Often whole sections of town are "busy" for hours at a time. Or phones go dead, or calls go through but to wrong numbers (not once but five or six times in a row, to five or six different numbers). There are parts of town that can no longer reach other parts of town by phone; people can recite the latest combinations for you. Callers devise improvisations of various sorts, but these tend to be short-lived. For example, in the weeks I was there the code word was "Koszalin"—the name of a backwater town in the distant northwest. If you couldn't get through from one Warsaw number to another, you could try dialling that town's area code and routing your call through it and back to Warsaw. The trouble was that too many people found out about this stratagem, and before long all the lines to Koszalin were jammed. (I wondered what the townspeople there must have made of their suddenly and unaccountably clogged connections.) One reason the system is breaking down so precipitately, some surmise, is that foreign companies coming in with their fibre-optic and satellite networks are snatching up the most competent employees of the state phone company, and there's no one left to monitor and repair the state company's lines (and not much money to repair them with anyway). In a few years, a new, high-tech grid will probably have been laid out over the old one, but most people feel certain that they won't be able to afford to tap into it, and they will have access only to the old system—and even there rates are rising so rapidly that most people are trying to keep their calls to three minutes or less.

A similar instance has to do with the Belvedere, a new haute-cuisine restaurant that has opened inside an old crystal pavilion and greenhouse in Warsaw's cherished Lazienki Park. After dusk, cars chug in and out of the park, delivering stylish diners to the Belvedere's elegant portals, in blatant contravention of a generations-old taboo against the presence of automobile traffic in the city's parks. Most Poles could never dream of being able to afford even the hors d'oeuvres at the Belvedere, and one of the few luxuries they are regularly able to attain—the leafy silence of their park—is now being destroyed by the intrusions of those who can.

The problem is not just that some are becoming wealthy while others are not; it's who is becoming wealthy that rankles most Poles. I was curious about who the current purchasers of luxury cars were, so one afternoon I decided to pay a call on the Mercedes-Benz dealership, in a building next door to the Europejski Hotel, downtown. During martial law, this building had been the political headquarters of the Army High Command—the nerve center of martial-law administration—and now the Army was renting out a wing to Mercedes. Inside, gleaming sedans basked in the fluorescent glow of a ground-floor showroom, and when I began asking questions of some of the salespeople I was quickly escorted upstairs to meet with the director of public relations for Mercedes-Benz' entire Polish operation. The director was genial, gladly providing me with all sorts of statistics and projections: over two thousand vehicles were sold or leased in 1991 alone, almost always for cash; fully half of the five hundred richest men in Poland (Polish magazines have started keeping lists of such things) boast Mercedes as their car of choice; and so forth. As he talked, I kept being distracted by the feeling that I had seen him before. In fact, I was becoming vaguely embarrassed, because I was convinced that he was just waiting for me to acknowledge the fact, although he was being polite about it, trying not to put me on the spot. All at once, I realized who he was. I looked again at his card: Tadeusz Zakrzewski. He had been one of the top two or three television reporters under the old regime—the Mike Wallace, as it were, of martial law. I also recalled where I remembered him from: a scene in Piotr Bikont and

"Wait a minute. I thought I was on trial here—not my vented spoonbill cap."

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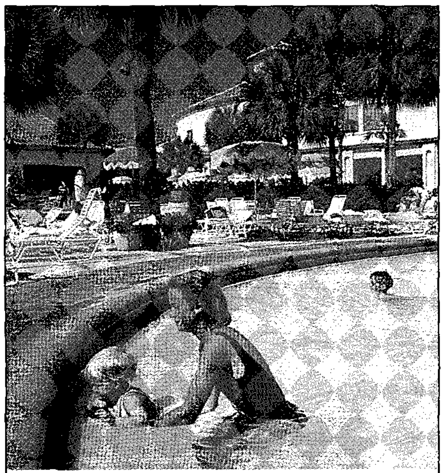

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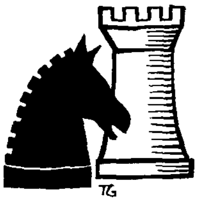
Leszek Dziumowicz' remarkable documentary about the backstage goings on at 1989's roundtable negotiations between the Communists and their onetime prisoners in the opposition—a scene in which Zakrzewski and his Polish state-television crew were endeavoring to charm Wladyslaw Frasyniuk, the young Solidarity hero from the Wroclaw region, during an interview. Frasyniuk had suddenly cut Zakrzewski short. Wagging a finger at the reporter's chest, he said, "When we used to watch you on the news in the prison TV room, we'd get ourselves all worked up just fantasizing how someday we might get a chance to spit in your face for all those years of your spitting in ours. Well, now the time has come and we don't spit in your face, because of the wider situation. But at least get that straight, O.K.?" In the film, Zakrzewski had smiled lamely.

And here he was in person, smiling gamely, having clearly landed on his feet. When our conversation now turned to his earlier career (he told me he had assumed that this was why I'd come to talk to him in the first place, and that all the rest had been mere journalistic pleasantries), he complained bitterly about how he had been treated under the new regime at Polish television. He hadn't been fired outright, he said, but it had become increasingly difficult for him to get his material on the air, and it just wasn't fair. I mentioned the scene with Frasyniuk. "Oh, I'm sure he *didn't mean me personally*," he said. "He was just expressing his dissatisfaction with Polish television generally." (A few days later, I ran into Frasyniuk at the parliament, where he's now a deputy, and I told him about my meeting with Zakrzewski. "I *meant* him personally," Frasyniuk told me. He then listed for me particular telecasts in which he said that Zakrzewski had slandered the image and the memory and the ethos of Solidarity.) Zakrzewski went on to say, "There's nothing I did on TV that I need to feel ashamed of. My performance was always thoroughly honorable and professional. I can look anyone I ever covered squarely in the eye. When I was involved in the verification hearings inside Polish television in the wake of martial law"—he seemed intent on digging himself into a deeper and deeper hole—"I worked to make sure that no good journalist was thrown out and that we eliminated people only on the basis of incompetence."



Zakrzewski told me a little about how he had got his new job. About ten months ago, an old friend of his, the former race-car driver Sobieslaw Zasada, who had recently become Mercedes' chief representative in Poland, heard about his problems and offered him a job ("but very low, I started at the bottom and had to work my way up"). He had worked hard, and now here he was. He readily admitted that he was earning far more here than he ever had at Polish television, but he said he was working a good deal harder as well. At one point, our conversation drifted toward his feelings about recent political and economic developments, and he expressed strong distaste for the extravagances of "wild capitalism."

Over lunch the next day, I mentioned my conversation with Zakrzewski to Ryszard Kapuscinski, and he commented, "You stumbled on a key reality there. Because it's the same with all these Western companies when they come here. They interview prospective senior employees, and they ask, 'What were you doing during the last ten years?' And if you say, 'I was active in the underground, running a mimeograph operation,' they say, 'Thank you. Next!' But if you say, 'I was a high *nomenklatura* in foreign trade,' or some such, that's great, that's what they want: you've got experience, and, what's more, you've got contacts with all the other *nomenklatura* types, both still in the government and at all the other foreign firms; you know how to get things done; you know how the world works. It's absolutely typical."

And completely infuriating to most Poles. A decision was made early during the transition that there would be no witch-hunts or mass reprisals. The oppositionist élites who held sway during the first Solidarity government—people like Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Labor Minister Jacek Kuron, and Adam Michnik—felt that, for the sake of civil peace, there needed to be "a thick black line," as they put it, separating the past from the present and the future. But even some of those who agreed with that decision intellectually now resent the feathery ease with which the *nomenklatura* have been landing in the new order—either working as high executives with foreign firms or running their own mysteriously privatized companies, or even continuing to head various state concerns—especially given the considerable difficulties encountered by so many others.

One day, I took a trip out to the old Solidarity-bastion town of Swidnik, just outside Lublin—a town whose one company, the state helicopter plant, now stood on the verge of being shut down completely—and I spoke with Alfred Bondos, one of the heroes of the 1980-82 campaigns there. On December 13, 1981, the night that martial law was declared, Bondos had famously eluded arrest, jumping from his fourth-story-apartment window, breaking his leg in the process, and still somehow managing to stagger over to the plant, where he helped spearhead a short-lived occupation strike. Even after the strike's violent suppression by rampaging storm troops, Bondos had continued to elude arrest, hiding out for three hundred and seventy days—a hundred and twenty of them inside the plant itself—while leading the resistance. Finally, in 1983, he was arrested, and he spent more than six months in jail. He had nevertheless remained an activist, and had recently been elected to a term on the town council. But, having long since been fired from his old position in the plant, he'd had to cobble together a succession of alternative livelihoods, and during our talk he told me that he had just launched a new private entrepreneurial venture of his own.

I asked him what kind.

"Worms," he replied. "California worms. Biohumus. I took my family's entire life savings, acquired a seven-hundred-square-metre plot and a bunch of worms, and I'm now trying to make a go of composting organic fertilizer for the surrounding farmers."

How was it going?

"Not at all well, actually," he replied. "It's extremely difficult. The thing is, I watch worms now, and I see how it is with them. They need certain things—not many, but what they need, they need. They need loam, oxygen, warmth. And it's the same with us new small entrepreneurs. We are like the worms of the coming capitalist order here in Poland, and we need certain things, too. For instance, we need access to certain minimal amounts of credit. It's impossible for us to grow without it—it's our oxygen. Our political leaders keep urging everyone, 'Leave those bankrupt state enterprises, strike out on your own, show some initiative!' Which is fine, only the banking system isn't there yet to sustain that kind of development. Or not for everyone, anyway. Certain short-term credits are available, the kind that are useful for *Handel* but not much else—two- or three-month turnovers. But if you need anything more long-term, if you're trying to start a productive enterprise, there's no credit available—unless you know the right people, that is.

"And *that's* the truly disgusting part," Bondos continued. "Because the thing you have to understand is that here in Swidnik capitalism didn't start in 1989; it started in 1988, when Rakowski"—Mieczyslaw Rakowski, the last Communist Prime Minister—"read the writing on the wall and desperately began capitalizing the *nomenklatura*. So, for instance, here in Swidnik the deputy mayor, my main enemy, the man who pursued me throughout my time in the underground, was named director of the Swidnik bank, the only bank in town. And the new Solidarity government never bothered to challenge those appointments. So that when I go to the bank now, hat in hand, seeking my few measly credits, whom do you think I encounter there, smugly deciding my fate?"

"That's nonsense," Adam Michnik said a few days later when I cited the example of Bondos in a discussion about the supposed failure of the first few Solidarity governments to overturn some of the more flagrant *nomenklatura* capitalizations. "A Communist apparat who becomes the head of a bank ceases to be a Communist at that very moment. It's true that if a Solidarity friend of your worm farmer had been named the head of the bank instead it might have been easier for him, but only because he'd now have a friend at the bank—not out of some higher considerations of justice. This worm man's problem does disguise a bigger, more real problem, however. Because where else were we to find banking and other sorts of administrative tal-

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ent, in the great numbers needed, if not from among the ranks of the former *nomenklatura*? Who else had the necessary experience?"

There *have* been exceptions—onetime oppositionist engineers and biologists and professors who have switched careers to become, say, bankers. One of them, a former computer scientist named Wlodzimierz Grudzinski, who now heads a small bank that answers to the Labor Ministry and is devoted specifically to small-business loans designed to spur employment growth, said of Bondos's problem, "It's simply easier for ordinary bankers to make one two-million-dollar loan than to make a hundred twenty-thousand-dollar loans. And it's also easier to lend money to a guy who wants to import ten tons of bananas from Berlin than to lend it to some guy who wants to try his luck raising ten tons of California worms—simply because evaluating the risk is easier. Your worm guy doesn't need some different officer in charge of the Swidnik bank; he needs *three new banks* in Swidnik. And that takes time—which, admittedly, he doesn't have. The thing is, Poland today isn't so much changing its banking system as building a new one, almost from scratch. It's not a question of the chicken or the egg. It's 'No chicken, no egg—*you* go figure it out.' "

Nor is all the new wealth old *nomenklatura*. Some of it is out-and-out mafia—the legacy of shady fortunes built up through smuggling and skimming and piracy and similar operations during the old regime. A large part of the economy used to run on such things, and some of it still does. Some of it is not quite so black but is decidedly gray: semi-sleazy operations. Some of it started out borderline gray and has become whiter. (I met a dapper yuppie type at a party and asked him what he did for a living. He was a doctor, he told me, an anesthesiologist, but over the last seven years he'd become a businessman. What kind? "I was doing computers," he told me. "But now I'm more into food processing." Why the change? "Oh, the answer to that is simple: the Soviet Union. See, the thing is, initially I was taking advantage of a loophole in the old regime's tariff laws to fly to Singapore and bring back caseloads of computer screens. Gradually, though, the market here got saturated, and I began heading into Byelorussia and Ukraine and selling my screens there, primarily to the big coöperative farms, which couldn't get them anyplace else. They can't pay me in hard currency, so instead they pay me in truckloads of blueberries and radishes and mushrooms, and so forth. I bring them back here, run a Geiger counter over the shipment—I usually end up having to throw out roughly a quarter of each shipment—and then I arrange to sell the rest to the Germans.") And, for that matter, some of the dealing is completely clean: many former oppositionists are doing very well for themselves. *Gazeta*, Solidarity's onetime daily, which grew out of the seminal underground weekly *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, has been doing spectacularly: the paper, with a staff of over a thousand, now boasts a circulation of nearly half a million—easily the largest in the country.

Another impression I got from talking to people about recent developments in the Polish economy, in addition to the anger over the polarization of wealth, was of a pervasive fear and anxiety concerning the future—a sense that one won't be up to the challenge, that one can't understand the new rules or doesn't have the necessary resources at one's command (intellectual, psychological, motivational, financial) to survive under them, that any moment now one is going to fall by the wayside (or be pushed). Countless surveys have indicated that significant percentages of Poland's industrial workers are convinced that they face imminent layoffs—many more than actually do, according to the transition's most ardent supporters. A version of the same psychology is darkening the American economic prospect these days—the difference being that a lot more Polish workers than American workers are in fact going to be laid off. Still, seeing how that psychology saps the American spirit gives one some idea of how pernicious its effects are in Poland—a country that, in any case, started out at a much lower level of wealth.

The transition's proponents insist that even if people do get laid off, an expanding economy will quickly open new prospects for them. The trouble is that people just don't believe it, and in the meantime they sense themselves becoming poorer.

"It's like this," Halina Bortnowska, a lay Catholic activist with roots deep in both Solidarity and the Nowa Huta steel mill, outside Krakow, told me. "We live from one day to the next, and we've been doing it for too long—for years now—and we're tired, we're exhausted. Every morning, I wake up and wonder, Is my washing machine going to work today? Because it's old, and one of these days it's not going to work, and this time I won't be able to fix it. Do you understand? I mean, on that day my standard of living will take a decisive plunge. Because I'll never be able to afford a new one, not ever again—not with prices for them and everything else being what they are

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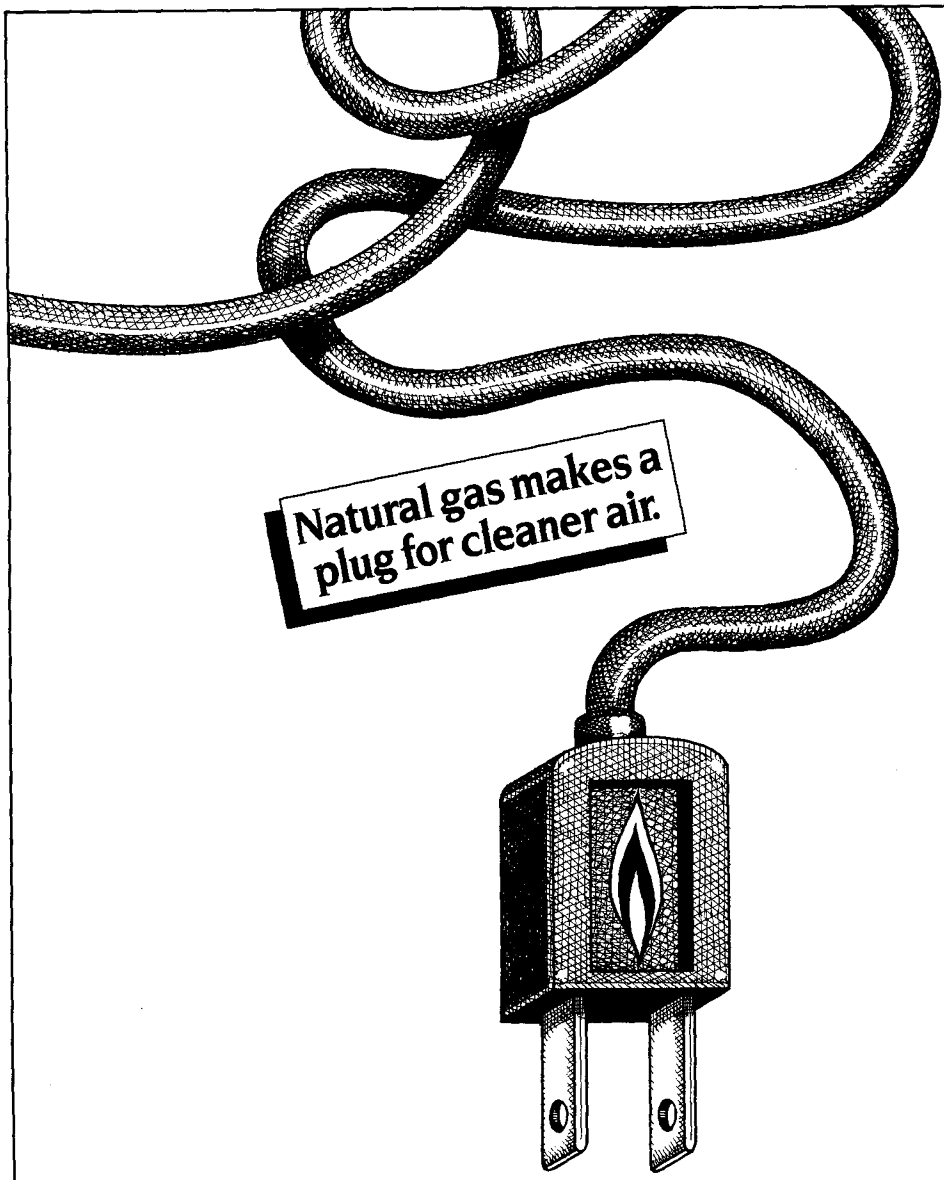

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nowadays. I will simply be much poorer from that day forward. And every day, waking up, I wonder, Is this going to be the day? *About everything.* And this is no way to live."

BEYOND general impressions of people's feelings about Poland's economy, there were quite specific and harrowing facts. The most notable of these this past winter was a suddenly looming huge state budget deficit, whose stark implications seemed to dominate all political discourse. The deficit appeared to have come out of nowhere during the last half of 1991, and at first Poles had difficulty even understanding the concept. "No one had ever heard of such a thing," Konstanty Gebert, the political columnist, told me one afternoon. "How could the state be in debt? In the old days, when one of the satellites went broke they just kicked the debt upstairs to the center, and the center starved a couple of cities in Siberia someplace to make up the difference. No problem. People have a hard time understanding that the state has simply run out of money."

It was particularly hard to understand because back in the summer of 1990 the transition's champions were crowing over the fact that the state treasury had managed to build up a slight surplus. "Actually, this deficit isn't all that much of a surprise," I was told by Alain de Crombrugghe, a Belgian researcher living in Warsaw, who until recently was pursuing graduate studies under Jeffrey Sachs at Harvard. "In seminar, Jeff always used to say that in all those Latin-American countries you got a surplus right after you instigated a stabilization program, for various technical reasons, but then the surplus quickly disappeared." Nobody was saying such things in the summer of 1990, however, when advocates of the Balcerowicz Plan were only too happy to cite the momentary surplus as further proof of the brilliance of their policies. The deficit began piling up at the outset of 1991, but it was really only during the fall that people started focussing on the sheer scale of the shortfall. It was hard to get an exact fix on things—both because they were changing day by day and because different ways of calculating the damage yielded different totals—but by March of this year economists were citing 1991 deficit figures as high as forty-one trillion zlotys (four billion dollars) out of a state budget of about two hundred and fifty trillion zlotys (twenty-three billion dollars).

At one level, the problem was the recession (and the mounting deficit was itself evidence, if any further evidence were needed, that the country's economy was in fact suffering a serious downturn). During recessions, every country's public revenues fall as its social expenditures rise; this is exactly what has been happening in the United States. In Poland, however, the pattern was complicated by conditions specific to the wickedly difficult ongoing transition to capitalism. During the Communist days, the overwhelming majority of state revenues came from taxes on or profits from the state enterprises themselves; some economists suggest that as much as eighty per cent of the state's revenues came from such sources. But, as Danuta Zagrodzka, *Gazeta's* economics reporter, succinctly framed matters recently, "factories don't pay taxes on what they don't produce." Production in the Polish state sector is, of course, down, in part because consumer demand has lessened and in part because such former clients as East Germany and the Soviet Union have disappeared.

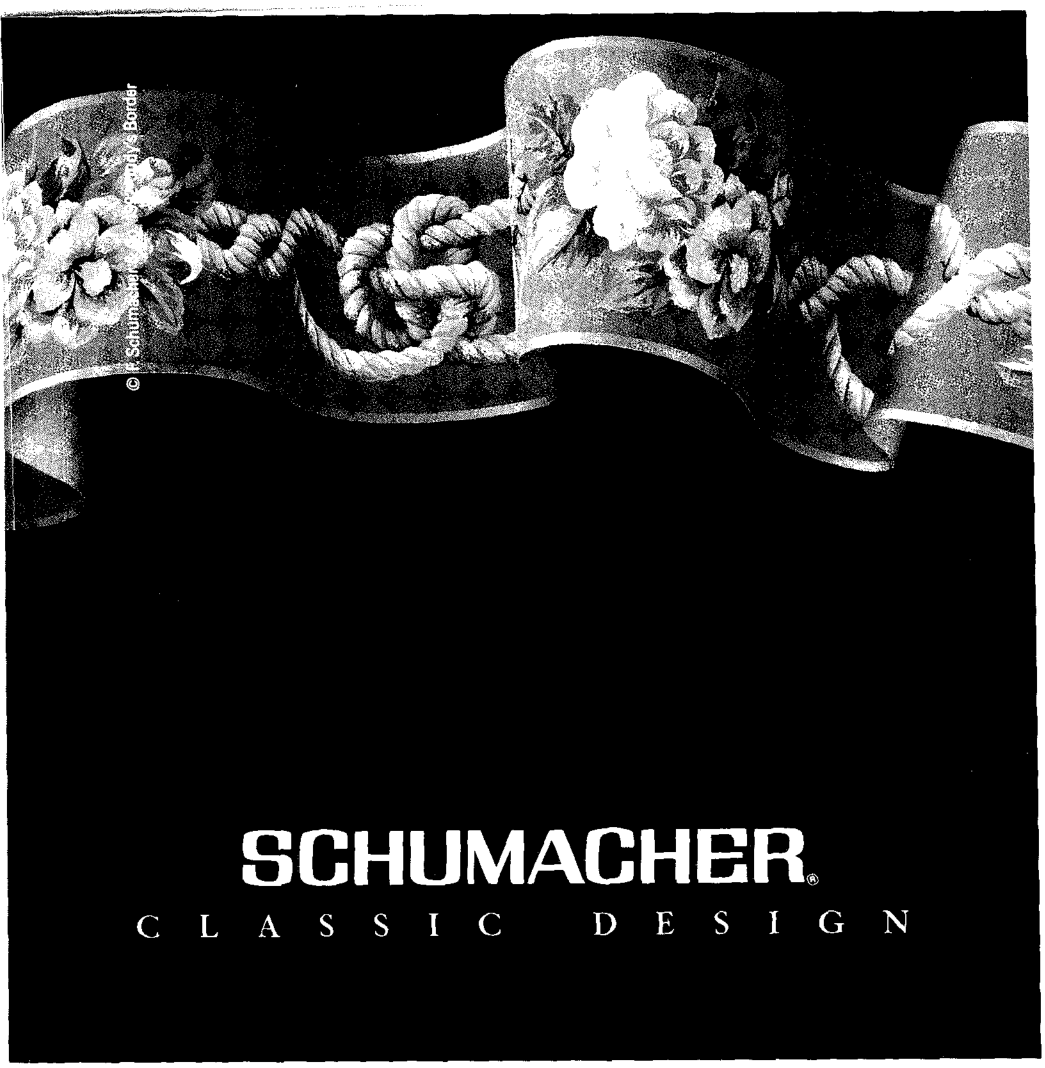
In theory, many of Poland's dinosaur operations, such as Nowa Huta or several of the tapped-out Silesian coal mines, were supposed to be going bankrupt during the past year anyway, thereby liberating their employees, as the phrase went, for more productive employment elsewhere—with the increased productivity creating taxable benefits further on down the line. Balcerowicz and his team were more or less ideologically committed to letting this process take place of its own accord. They would "establish and maintain the wider fiscal and monetary parameters" within which the industrial sector would simply start sorting itself out according to the inexorable laws of the market, without specific government interference or guidance.

Maddeningly, however, the expected sorting out didn't occur. The lighter industrial and more modern facilities began going under (in part, as officials now acknowledge, because of a misguided tax policy, which penalized high-tech physical plants and capital investment), while the dinosaurs, for their part, just kept on going. Rather quickly, they ran through their reserves, and then began cannibalizing themselves and entering into ever more convoluted relationships of cross-indebtedness with similarly threatened institutions. Part of the problem was that management remained to a large extent the province of *nomenklatura* types, who were able to enter into side-door deals with other *nomenklatura* types (at other factories, in the banks, and so forth), thereby artificially perpetuating the survival of their enterprises and undercutting the intent of the transition's planners. Another part of the problem was that workers, understandably, colluded in these schemes, sometimes initiating them themselves. (Workers now often had a host of common interests with their once hated masters.) And still another part of the problem was that bankruptcy itself was such a new concept, the laws so novel and their execution so mysterious, that creditors were reluctant to force the issue, preferring to let debtors limp along rather than risk complete losses. What's more, the private sector, for all its growth, was nowhere near ready to absorb the surge of new job seekers that a serious, honest, market-clearing sequence of bankruptcies would have entailed. Officials may in theory have wanted the Nowa Huta steel mill to go bankrupt but not in practice—not yet, anyway.

Hence, the dinosaurs persisted, no longer generating revenues but, rather, building up vast submerged layers of indebtedness, whose periodic revelation served only to heighten the state's total deficit. At one point, late in his tenure, Balcerowicz went to Moscow to discuss bilateral issues with Boris Yeltsin, and Yeltsin offered him a job on the spot as a senior adviser. Balcerowicz declined, but he is said to have given Yeltsin one piece of hard-earned advice. Whatever you do, he told him, don't assume that the state industries will sort themselves out on their own.

Rapid privatization was supposed to address the various problems—once enterprises were privately controlled, the theory went, owners and stockholders would have an interest in enforcing efficiency and increasing productivity to maximize profits—but during 1991 Poland's privatization drive stalled badly. Generally speaking, three approaches to privatization were being pursued simultaneously. The first was turning enterprises into capital-stock companies and selling shares on the fledgling Warsaw stock exchange. (To date, this method has been attempted in only a dozen relatively modest instances.) The second was liquidation, by which was meant not elimination but restructuring—for example, breaking a large entity into several smaller units and selling them off separately to workers or managers or outsiders. (One difficulty with this approach was that Polish law requires that all of an enterprise's assets be accounted for before any single one can be broken off—a major bottleneck.) And the third was outright sales to foreign or joint ventures. All told, only twelve hundred of Poland's eight thousand state enterprises had been privatized by the end of 1991—well below what had been expected and, in fact, budgeted for. When it came to assigning blame for the slow pace, there was plenty to go around: competing ministries that were alternatively seen as bloated or overwhelmed, a deadlocked parliament, suspicious workers. Workers became all the more suspicious when they saw how at the Krosno Glassworks, one of five flagship companies first listed on the stock exchange, privatization was immediately followed by mass layoffs. Janusz Sciskalski, the head of the Solidarity chapter at the Ursus tractor plant, outside Warsaw, told me that he and his colleagues had become convinced that enterprises needed to be restructured before they even entered the privatization process, to insure both a higher price and better conditions for the workers.

A year ago, it had seemed that Poland was on the verge of vaulting over all these complications by means of a radical mass-privatization program—a scheme involving the free distribution of vouchers to all adult Polish citizens, which they could exchange for shares either in state companies or in mutual funds (which would, in turn, acquire stakes in groups of such companies), at which point virtually all of Poland's industrial base would be privatized at once. As the



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year wore on, however, the number of enterprises to be included in the continually delayed scheme rapidly dwindled—from thousands to four hundred, then to two hundred, until by this January it was down to a hundred and thirty. The “mass” in mass privatization, it was explained to me during this visit, had always referred to the mass of individuals who would be receiving vouchers, not the mass of companies that would be privatized—although that’s not how I remember it. Neighboring Czechoslovakia, meanwhile, is on the verge of a mass-privatization program of the first type—an audacious experiment that is taking place with so little preparation or regulation that some experts are predicting calamitous results. Privatization, I was repeatedly told this winter in Warsaw, simply turns out to be an incredibly complicated process—conceptually, legally, economically, politically—and to do it right takes time. The problem is that privatization was supposed to be a substantial revenue-earner for the state last year, to the tune of fifteen trillion zlotys; instead, after the considerable expenses involved in preparing the relatively few enterprises for processing, the state may have actually ended up losing money on the program, thereby further aggravating the deficit.

Still another factor contributing to the deficit was Poland’s failure to establish either a comprehensive individual and corporate tax code or the machinery for enforcing it. (It was only on January 1st of this year that a version of an individual tax code finally kicked in.) Companies and individuals quickly evolved schemes for evading whatever taxes were imposed, so that at the very time the state statistical office was boasting that more than twenty per cent of Polish production was already in private hands it released figures showing that the private sector was contributing as little as five per cent of the total tax revenues. (Ryszard Bugaj, the dissident economist, worked up some numbers to show that tax receipts per employee in the private sector during 1990 were less than a tenth of those in the public sector.) Ironically, therefore, the way the system was until recently set up, the more the state privatized, the worse its budget deficit became. Again, in fairness, a comprehensive tax code is a complex body of law and regulation, and it’s not surprising that the overwhelmed Polish government has had to take its time developing one. Critics of the ambitious pace of the transition merely wonder whether it makes sense to charge full speed ahead before such structures have been secured. Advocates insist that the country has no choice.

And the deficit problem was further worsened by the new government’s policy on tariffs. In part to eliminate the initial monopoly advantages of the state companies and to encourage cost competition during the economy’s opening-up process, the Balcerowicz team lowered tariffs across the board until they were among the lowest in Europe. Foreign goods flooded in. One immediate consequence was the loss of all those tariff revenues. A second one, critics charged, was the sudden bankruptcy of all sorts of small-scale manufacturing enterprises, both public and private, that couldn’t possibly compete with the economies of scale available to foreign companies. Jerzy Urban, the martial-law regime’s infamous press spokesman, took typically perverse delight in pointing out to me “the paradox whereby small private manufacturing flourished during the late Communist times precisely owing to the pervasive context of shortage—any piece of shit sold; it was enough to sit on a stool filling plastic lighters with fluid to get spectacularly rich—whereas now we are seeing an exactly contrary process: the bankruptcies of all sorts of services and small craftsmen because, in the current wide-open market conditions, the majority simply lose out in competition with the cheaper, better-made Western products.” They lose out, and the state loses out—garnering neither the foreign tariff nor the domestic tax.

AND then there were the scandals. “Corruption is much, much worse today than at any time during the Communist era,” Piotr Bikont, the filmmaker, told me one day. “There’s no doubt about that. All the controls have broken down.” Communist corruption was never about money, several other people commented: money didn’t mean anything; it was about access and privilege and protection. Now everything is money. “Were we just naïve before or have people changed?” one woman wondered. “I think people have changed.” Halina Bortnowska elaborated on these themes: “Commu-

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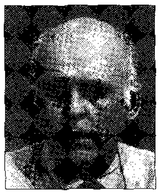

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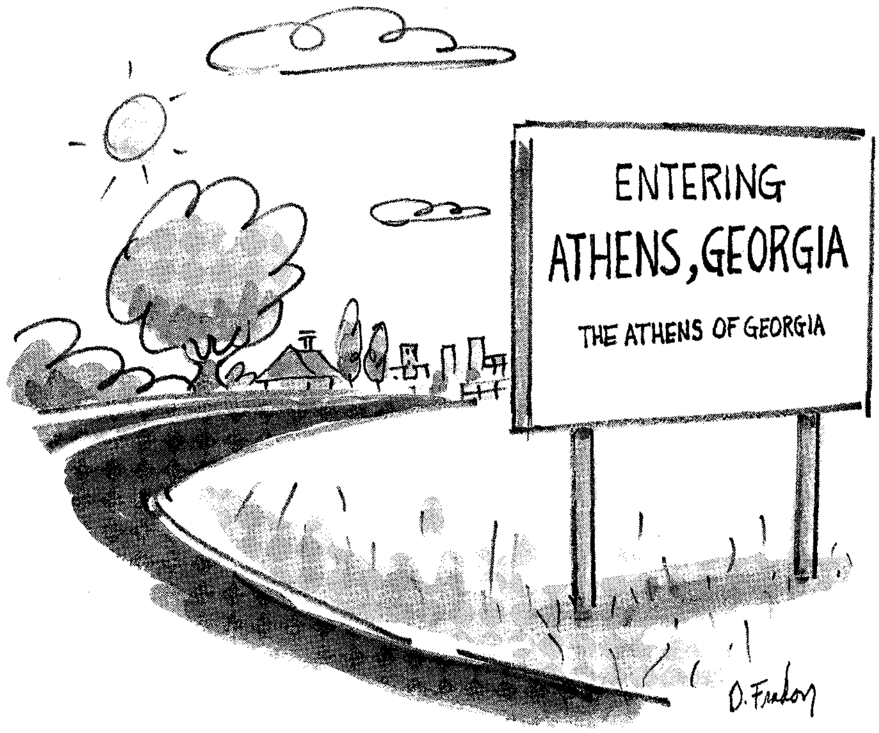

nist corruption was more institutionalized—was semi-legal. It was the entire system that was corrupt. Now corruption is more individual, entrepreneurial. There's a lot of crime, and crime is organizing itself."

Some people hazarded hopefully that the corruption might be just a passing phase. "First capital is always wild," Henryk Wujec, a veteran dissident who is now a deputy, suggested tentatively. "Large fortunes get generated through wild swindles, but then they serve as the foundation. In America, after all, you first killed all your Indians." Others alluded to the origins of the Kennedy family fortune. Zbigniew Janas, another veteran Solidarity activist and current deputy, said that a recent German visitor had told him how much Poland today reminded him of West Germany in the fifties. "But that's O.K.," Janas assured me. "People start up with small illegal operations, they make money, eventually they want to go legit. Later on, when our upswing comes, it will become necessary to limit the gray zone, but not now. Anyway, it wouldn't be possible to limit it now even if we wanted to—it would take half the population acting as police just to control it."

Many people resented this sort of attitude. The Warsaw taxi scene, for example, was entirely unregulated—given over to blatantly competing mafias. One longtime licensed driver complained, "I just don't get what Balcerowicz wants. It's sheer banditry out here. I'm honest, I charge the posted rate, I pay my taxes, and I could easily pay ten times as much in taxes if they'd just regulate the situation, and clear out all these illegal operators who don't pay any taxes. But they're ideologically opposed to doing that. And it's the same with the whole economy."

The taxi wars were petty compared with some of the more elaborate scams that began coming to light toward the end of last year. The most spectacular of these involved the so-called Art-B Boys, two charismatic young musicians who set themselves up in business in a big way. Their company, Art-B, had been one of the most stunning success stories of 1990. "People were simply thrilled, in awe, watching them grow," Konstanty Gebert recalled. "Maybe this was what capitalism was supposed to be all about, making a hundred million zlotys overnight. Who knew?" Art-B spread its wealth lavishly: branching out from an initial focus on sacred Catholic songs, the Boys began sponsoring music festivals (classical and jazz) and film and theatre festivals and art shows (they were like Philip Morris and Mobil combined, at a time when the state itself was having to cut back dramatically on its own cultural patronage), and political campaigns as well—all kinds of political campaigns. The Art-B Boys backed *both* Mazowiecki and Walesa during the 1990 Presidential race, and as the political spectrum fragmented they seemed to scatter their contributions all over the map.

After the Art-B bubble burst, people got a chance to explore some of the vividly imaginative methods the Boys had used in building up their fortune. For instance, in the early stages they would go to the West, take out a three-month commercial loan, use it to buy up truckloads of products, cart them back into Poland, sell the merchandise quickly by undercutting the prices of any competitors (even at a substantial loss), invest the resultant zlotys in high-interest-bearing Polish accounts (accounts that, thanks to the local inflation rate, were bringing returns of more than sixty per cent), cash out after three months, repay the Western banks right on time, and plow the substantial profits into a second go-around. Midway through their run, they procured the Korean Goldstar Company's Polish franchise, and entirely evaded an already low tariff by shipping into Poland TVs in two pieces (the insides and the outer casing) and having them put back together by war veterans, whose salaries weren't subject to taxation.

But such schemes were trifles in comparison with the Art-B Boys' truly big caper. It's now being alleged that in September of 1990 they offered a five-thousand-dollar bribe to a minor clerk at the branch office of a state bank in a small town in southwestern Poland. ("*That's* the scandal!" Gebert exclaimed. "That the guy was willing to be bought off for a mere five thousand dollars!") In exchange for the bribe, the clerk signed an official letter saying that they had three hundred thousand dollars in an account at the bank, although at the time they didn't. Using the letter as collateral, they opened an account at another bank on the other side of the country. Then they went to a third bank and wrote out a check withdrawing the money from the second bank, and opened a new account. Since Poland has yet to establish a central clearing house for banks (until 1988, there simply wasn't any need for one, with only four banks in the whole country), there's no overnight computerized processing of checks; things go by mail, and the mail can take weeks getting from one provincial outpost to another. While the Boys' checks were travelling, the supposedly deposited funds were raking in sixty, seventy, eighty per cent interest at all three banks simultaneously. Early in this scam, the Boys did in fact deposit three hundred thousand dollars in the first bank, but meanwhile they had built up an entire operation by transferring ever vaster suitcaseloads of money by private helicopter from one bank to another to yet another. (By the end of the scheme, they'd sluiced a total of eighteen billion dollars through the Polish banking system.) Finally, just before they were about to be arrested (it is thought that they must have been tipped off), they withdrew close to four hundred million dollars from the last bank in their chain and decamped for Israel, leaving the state holding the bag (since it was a state employee who had falsely guaranteed the original deposit in the first place). Anna Bikont, *Gazeta's* reporter in charge of the swindle beat, remarked to me, "If one's to believe the state prosecutor, another few dozen Art-B cases and we'd have used up the state's entire annual budget."

In another major scam, activities by *nomenklatura* holdovers at the Finance Ministry's Fund for Foreign Debt Service (FOZZ) appear to have spun wildly out of control. Poland, as part of an international debt-renegotiation package, had committed itself (in exchange for a considerable lowering of the principal due) not to try to buy heavily discounted pieces of the rest of its own debt on the open market. Somebody, however, appears to have authorized a top-secret fund with which the ex-*nomenklatura* operatives proceeded to do just that. Using a budget of a hundred and eighty million dollars, they entered the highly speculative secondary-debt market, apparently racking up huge gains one day (which they siphoned off and seem to have rechannelled through various old-boy *nomenklatura* networks) and huge losses the next (which they dutifully assigned to the state account). The whole thing was so secret that the state is still in the process of finding out, on a week-by-week basis, the extent of its exposure. One estimate puts it at as much as four hundred million dollars.

Another swindle, referred to as Rublesgate, revolved around the fact that for a period it was possible, through an elaborate, roundabout process, to convert soft (worthless) Soviet rubles

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FRATELLI ROSSETTI

into almost-hard Polish zlotys and then into completely solid American dollars, in such a way that at the end of the day the Polish state treasury was left with a huge, irretrievable loss in its dollar account. And then there were more ordinary, contraband swindles, such as the highly costly Schnappsgate, and Cigarettegate, and all the other gates.

Part of the trouble with most of these scandals—and especially with Art-B—was that Polish capitalism's regulatory structure was (and still is) so underdeveloped that it wasn't at all clear whether (except for the five-thousand-dollar bribe) any laws had in fact been broken. The Art-B Boys claimed that, far from keeping their exploits under wraps, they had long been bragging about their so-called oscillator effect and urging others to exploit it. (And others may well have done so.) The Solidarity senator Alina Pienkowska, who was formerly a nurse in the hospital at the Gdansk shipyard and became famous for her decisive role during the 1980 strike there, told me that on a visit to Washington she had described some of Poland's recent scandals to congressional aides. "They all said, 'Oh, yeah, we had all those schemes here in the United States back in the twenties and thirties,'" she recalled. "They had names for all of them—'daisy chains' and 'check kites' and 'Ponzi schemes' and 'pyramid scams,' and so forth. They described how it had taken the United States decades to develop the appropriate legislation."

Beyond the lack of regulations, Poland was desperately lacking in regulators. Ryszard Kapuscinski told me he had been part of a special cultural-advisory group that met one day last year with then Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki. Why wasn't the Prime Minister doing anything about all these scandals, they demanded to know—scandals that were draining vital reserves from the country? "He was quiet for a moment," Kapuscinski recalled, "and then replied, 'Try to understand that in my whole prosecutor's office I have only two people with any expertise whatsoever in dealing with financial corruption. How do you expect me to deal with it?'"

The whole situation has left a bitter taste. "The Art-B Boys—they swaggered around like everybody's saviors," Janusz Sciskalski, the Solidarity leader at the Ursus tractor plant, commented. In one of its schemes, Art-B had moved to buy up an entire year's worth of Ursus' tractor production, thereby momentarily saving the plant from closing, but the deal soured. "They were economic wise guys who stole and then dispensed trifles," Sciskalski said. "Sixty thousand dollars, I remember, they gave to a hospital once so that it could settle a debt with Johnson & Johnson. Massive television coverage—a huge big deal. We were supposed to be grateful. They were like Robin Hood in reverse—robbing the state treasury blind so that now entire hospitals will be forced to close, schools will be shut down. It's disgusting—the height of cynicism."

WHATEVER the reason for the state's enormous budget deficit—whether it derived from Art-B, FOZZ, the various gates, the tax situation, the tariff situation, the stalled privatization drive, or the persistence of the dinosaurs—Poland this winter was going to have to address it immediately.

The outgoing government of Jan Krzysztof Bielecki had locked in steep new rate increases for domestic heating and electricity, and had also proposed a fifty-per-cent cut in funding for the health services. One day during my visit, I was passing the Warsaw Medical Academy's Teaching Hospital and decided to stop in for a look. Built during a development drive under the Communist leader Edward Gierek and financed by foreign loans, the hospital is now seventeen years old, and although it still looks somewhat new on the outside, it is crumbling within. The first thing I saw inside was a sign on the emergency room's bulletin board detailing the hospital's dire budgetary circumstances and urging doctors to limit admissions to the most serious cases and to cut back sharply on prescriptions, and pleading with them to volunteer a month's service this year without pay. The whole facility struck me as a giant version of Halina Bortnowska's washing machine. It was breaking down, and as it did so nobody could say when or if the country would be able to afford another one. In more advanced capitalist systems, billionaires occasionally take up some of the slack, financing entire new hospital wings in exchange for the immortalization of their own benefi-

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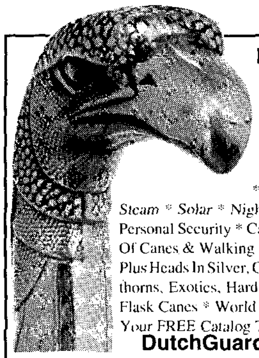

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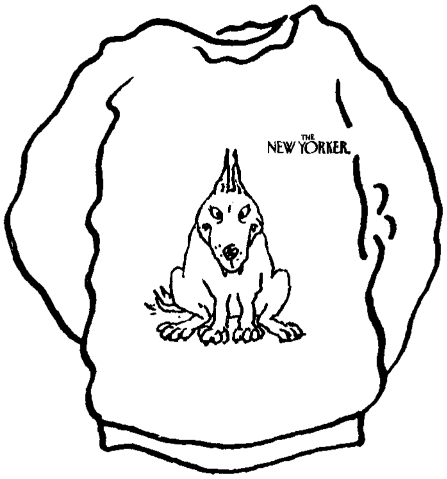

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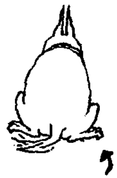

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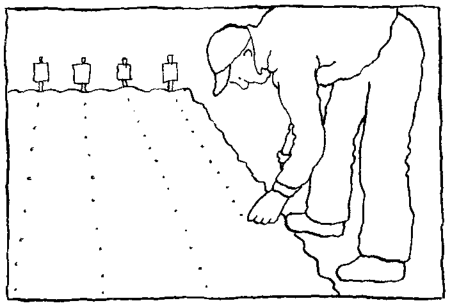
cence. But in 1991 such windfalls seemed at least a generation off in Poland—Art-B notwithstanding, this was a time for building up fortunes, not dispersing them—and it was by no means clear how the Polish health system was going to stumble along until then. Meanwhile, Bielecki's final budget was also proposing a cut in unemployment benefits, to just thirty-six per cent of the average wage (already quite low), and, at the same time, an acceleration in the rate of closure of various derelict enterprises. Predictions for unemployment by the end of the year were now running to nineteen or twenty per cent. Old-age pensions were likewise slated to be squeezed. (The outrageous, and outrageously successful, satirical weekly *Nie*, which is edited by Jerzy Urban, invited its older readers to send in the stub from their current month's pension check, along with a brief essay answering the question "Why do I even bother to go on living?") Schools, too, many of which were staggering through the winter without heating (except when parents were able to band together to raise special supplementary funds), were now going to face another round of cutbacks.

There was serious question whether the new parliament would have the stomach for such Draconian measures. Its members hadn't slogged through decades of opposition and months of campaigning simply to be the people who cut the social fabric of Poland to shreds. Protest strikes were breaking out all over the country. At Nowa Huta, workers had embarked on a hunger strike; one of their central demands, in what seemed almost a macabre parody of socialist realism, was for renewed investment in the plant's notoriously antiquated smelting unit. Both Jan Olszewski, the new Prime Minister, and the parliament were gagging at the thought of the task before them.

Yet if they didn't face the challenge, if they simply started printing great quantities of money to paper over the deficit, they risked both the wrath of the International Monetary Fund and, more to the point, another round of inflation, or even hyperinflation. After all the sacrifices of the past two years, the Poles seemed to be back where they'd started—having to gird for a whole new round of austerity. (Three people asked me, separately, "Am I the only one who remembers how Balcerowicz promised that we'd get through the worst during the first six months and after that things would begin to improve, until within two years our horizons would be opening wide?") These were the difficulties that Olszewski and his noticeably shaky parliamentary coalition now faced as they began trying to devise their own economic plan.

At one point, I reached Jeffrey Sachs on the telephone. He was back at Harvard, on one of his increasingly rare visits home. He has been spending most of his time these days advising Boris Yeltsin and his team on their transition, and tends to make it back through Poland less than once a month. "*Of course* Poland has problems," Sachs told me. "The deficit, for instance, is a serious problem. But do you know what the Poles' biggest, most stunning problem is? The absolute inability to process good news. They are pessimists to the core of their being, and will simply not allow themselves to see the glass filling up. With them, everything is just a little bit off. The other day, for instance, they released a state-of-the-union report bewailing how, for the first time in ten years, exports were off by two per cent. *Of course* exports were off: their trade with Comecon and the Soviet Union collapsed *almost completely!* The big news is that in just three years they've managed to nearly double their exports to the West. That's an absolutely stunning achievement—and they can't bring themselves to see it." Sachs cited several other examples of rosy figures swathed in pitch-black government pronouncements, and then asked, "Are they mad? Are they crazy? I don't get it. I ask them, 'Why are you talking like this?' And they say, 'We try to paint the bleakest possible picture to scare people so that they'll stop striking.' This is absolutely backward—the complete opposite of real leadership, as far as I'm concerned. Instead of somebody's getting up and saying, 'The only thing we have to fear is fear itself,' they're all running around saying, 'We have everything to fear!' "



Sachs went on to talk about the deficit, which he considered a serious but normal problem. Marshalling figures on the lower end of the various estimates I had heard, he pegged the total deficit at something like five or six per cent of the gross domestic product, and proceeded to show how—with a combination of further budget cuts, new domestic bond issues, international assistance, and the printing of a limited amount of unbacked money (that is, the allowing of a certain amount of inflation)—it ought to be possible to bring the problem under control.

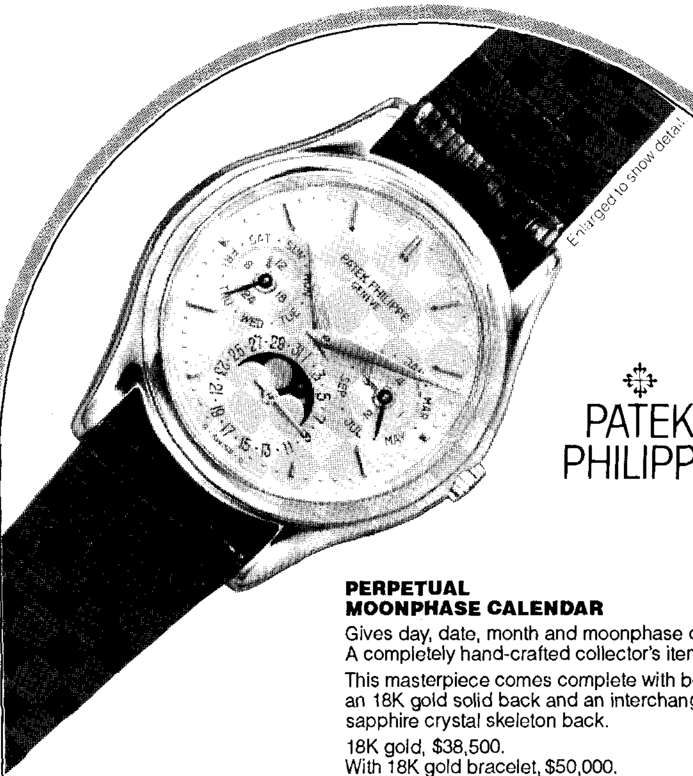
"But that other problem," he said, referring to the Poles' gloomy outlook, "I don't know. The government issued another report the other day, and, buried somewhere deep inside, in the middle of a bleak diatribe, it acknowledged that 'average real consumption went up in 1991.' Like that—a throwaway line. I mean, that used to be the *goal*—that used to be the whole idea. Am I missing something? Tell me. Am I?" Sachs paused, and then went on, "These transitions have always been difficult, and most difficult in the earliest stages. And I realize this has been difficult for common people. But if you look at Spain, for instance—the economic miracle of the last twenty years—the point is that it *took* twenty years, and in the early stages they had unemployment rates of seventeen, eighteen per cent, and all kinds of controversy. In many ways, Poland's main task now is the same as Spain's was back then—the return to Europe, the reintegration with this tremendous dynamo of the European economy. That's the direction Poland has to be moving in. In any given month, you can have ups or downs, but it's the direction that's important. That's what they have to keep to.

"I mean, you look at Japan in 1947 or Germany in 1949 and 1950—a tremendous sense of crisis and despair, vast underestimation of the prospects for radical reform, extreme vulnerability to political challenge. In 1947, the situation in Japan looked so grim that only the presence of the United States occupation authorities prevented a general strike. In 1949, Konrad

Adenauer won the German chancellorship by a single vote—his own—and it was only thanks to that that he was able to install Ludwig Erhard as his Economics Minister. You read Erhard's memoirs today, and you can see the bleak vision he was having to contend with at the time. Wait a second." Sachs left the phone for a few moments and then came back. "Here, listen to this—this is Erhard recalling the German mood in the late forties. 'It was calculated that for every German there would be one plate every fifty years; a pair of shoes every twelve years; a suit every fifty years; and that only every third German would have a chance of being buried in his own coffin.' Sound familiar? And then, here, listen: 'Few realized that if people were allowed once more to become aware of the value and worth of freedom, dynamic forces would be released.' *That's* the point. That's what they need to be stressing."

Ryszard Bugaj exploded with exasperation when I relayed these and similar Sachs comments to him during a conversation in the Sejm's dining hall. "What is he talking about?" Bugaj said. "Germany! Japan! The situations were completely different from ours. They weren't coming out of Communism, they were getting huge amounts of assistance, they weren't simply relying on the market. How can he say those things? There's a word in Polish that absolutely captures Sachs. It's the perfect word, and I'm afraid you're going to find it completely untranslatable—how on earth are you going to translate this? Because it's Sachs personified. The word, very Polish, is—well, I'll spell it: H-U-C-P-A. We pronounce it—" He pronounced it "chutzpah."

For a long time, Bugaj was a voice crying in the wilderness when it came to these matters. His pessimism was not a matter of temperament, as was the case with various officials on the Balcerowicz team, who, whatever their failure of vision or rhetoric, still essentially agreed with Sachs's programmatic line. Bugaj disagreed fundamentally with the program. Recently, people in Poland had begun to listen more carefully to his continuing misgivings. And, for that matter, the consensus of the international experts and advisers was itself beginning to break down. At one point, I had a chance to speak with Alice Amsden, formerly of



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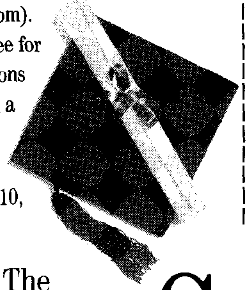

"My parents taught me that life is full of surprises, so I've always preferred to stay indoors."

• •

the Harvard Business School and now a professor of economics with the graduate faculty of the New School, in New York City. She has begun advising the Organization for Economic Coöperation and Development on Poland's reindustrialization. In passing, I mentioned some of Sachs's analogies. "*Spain?*" she interrupted. "Spain had a comprehensive industrial policy, considerable E.C. support, extensive planning and government intervention, targeted protection. Its reintegration into Europe was part of a very deliberate regional policy. It wasn't anything like this free-market, pie-in-the-sky-privatization, emphasis-on-austerity program that the I.M.F. has been trying to foist on Poland."

It turned out that the I.M.F. and the World Bank were her bugaboos, much more than Jeffrey Sachs was. "Take South Korea, which is a place I happen to know a lot about." (Oxford University Press published Amsden's "Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization" in 1989.) "Compare what the I.M.F. and the World Bank are forcing on Poland with what happened in South Korea, or in Taiwan. Generally, the World Bank says that reindustrialization warrants no financial incentives, such as subsidized loans or export credits. It assumes that once Eastern Europe 'gets its prices right,' as it says—you know, lets production costs be determined exclusively by supply and demand, free from government interference—those enterprises will be able to compete against foreign companies in both domestic and foreign markets. And what 'getting the prices right' means for them with regard to Eastern Europe is simple: reduce excess employment and drive down wages. That's the bottom line. Whereas you look at South Korea, and Taiwan, and the Japanese before them, and their governments all intervened extensively, deliberately getting the prices of credit and foreign exchange 'wrong,' by subsidizing and protecting domestic industries until they could catch up to international standards. That's the lesson."

Amsden went on to say that she had recently been touring Polish factories, and had been amazed to discover how truly promising the prospects of several of them were. "They've got good, highly motivated, solidly trained people, and often quite surprisingly sophisticated physical plants," she said. "Not all of them, by any means, but a lot of them. In almost every case, however, they're missing some key component. This one needs a period of tariff protection as it retools for its new market, that one needs a specifically targeted subsidy, this one needs some kind of loosened credit arrangements, that one needs a particular capital investment to bring it up to world standards—all things that the government, on a case-by-case basis, ought to be considering, right along with any ongoing privatization program. Otherwise, these places will have all gone bankrupt even before they can be privatized. And the I.M.F. ought to be encouraging such government initiatives, instead of discouraging them on an ideologically rigid basis. Those are precisely the sorts of intervention that made it possible for Korea and Taiwan to flourish."

The Korea-Taiwan analogy is the big new controversy among Eastern European experts. Is its example relevant? What *is* its example? What specifically did these countries or didn't these countries do? Martin Wolf, in an article in the *Financial Times* last November 15th, maintained that it was the ways in which the South Korean and Taiwanese governments *didn't* intervene in their countries' development that proved key to their success, as opposed to such government-intervention policies as those of Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, and Pakistan, which failed. He also pointed out how radically dissimilar were the approaches of other East Asian success stories; Singapore and Hong Kong, for example, are much more wide open. Finally, he pointed out that South Korea and Taiwan had nondemocratic, authoritarian governments, and that this was not a particularly happy model for Poland to be exploring.

"But isn't the point about government-directed reindustrialization that it works only when you've got competent people in the government doing the directing?" David Gruen, a mild-natured Australian economist currently teaching at Princeton, subsequently commented, when I broached the subject with him. "Otherwise, it can just get to be a bloody disaster." One of the reasons that many leading Poles and their international advisers have been so reluctant to even consider more government-directed investment and reindustrialization is that the ministries and the banking system that would be called upon to do the lion's share of the directing are still so saturated, particularly at their all-important mid-levels, with the same old boys from the prior regime who got Poland into all this trouble in the first place.

Mulling over these comments, I recalled something that Halina Bortnowska had said to me early in my trip. "I'm afraid I just don't have complete trust in those who are advising us these days," she remarked. "They are good people, with the best of intentions and tremendous expertise. But in what? Nobody has ever done this thing we're attempting to do here—to find some way out of a bankrupt Communist-command economy. We are all newcomers, and I don't trust their self-certainty. How can they be so sure? How can they know? They are like doctors who are splendid at treating tuberculosis or cancer when what we have here is AIDS. Their help is better than nothing, but it may not be enough."

"AN unskilled team of surgeons is performing a complicated procedure" is how *Gazeta's* senior political columnist, Ernest Skalski, recently described political developments in Poland after last October's parliamentary elections. "They're not doing great, but somehow they're managing. Suddenly, in the middle of the operation, a new team shows up, insisting that it, too, has the right to try its hand. The patient is lying there cut open, his guts all splayed out, the anesthesia is wearing off, and now the two teams take to pushing and struggling among themselves all around the table. Finally, the new guys wrest control and start in, but they presently acknowledge that actually they'll only be submitting their plan of operation in some two months' time."

And, indeed, compounding Poland's budget-deficit crisis this winter was another sort of crisis—an increasingly glaring deficit in the legitimacy of the country's political classes. The October elections had proved to be an almost unmitigated disaster. To begin with, a majority of the Poles, only two years into their hard-won democratic resurgence, chose not to vote at all. Some observers blamed the turnout, of just over forty per cent, on a kind of

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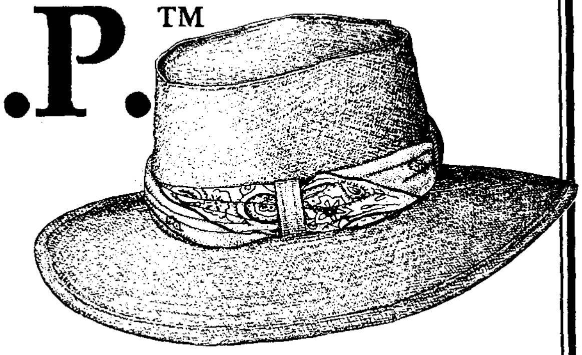

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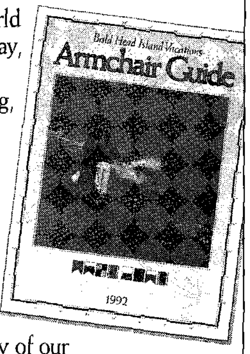

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citizenship fatigue, occasioned by well over a decade's chronic crises; others suggested that voters were frustrated by the recent series of elections, in which they had continually ended up getting precisely what they hadn't voted for. In the 1989 election, for example, they had overwhelmingly repudiated the Communists, but the Communists nevertheless retained not only a majority of seats in the Sejm—this had been agreed upon in advance—but also, even after they surrendered state power in abject humiliation just a few months later, largely unchallenged positions of dominance throughout the country's political economy. In 1990, the Poles' overwhelming vote against the original democratic Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki—he received only eighteen per cent in the first round of the Presidential balloting—and, during runoffs, in favor of Lech Walesa had been a transparent repudiation of the Balcerowicz Plan; but although Walesa himself had regularly savaged the plan throughout the campaign, he reinforced it once he became President.

Other observers of last October's elections pointed out that in a country where everyone used to have to vote, at the risk of sanction, in admittedly meaningless elections, not voting had become an exhilarating form of protest in itself. Still others believed that many Poles were in despair over the brutal cacophony and vicious personal slanders that had replaced the unity in their once cherished Solidarity—that they just wanted everyone to stop fighting, and didn't want to be forced to take sides. And others suggested, plausibly, that many Poles simply didn't feel qualified to judge the validity of the many competing abstruse economic doctrines, which in any case had received only minimal explanation during the campaign.

Those who did vote were faced with a bewildering choice of sixty-five eligible parties, and the electoral laws were so perversely drawn—themselves the result of months of self-serving and finally inconclusive skirmishes among former Solidarity allies—that twenty-nine of those parties ended up attaining seats in the Sejm (eleven of them with only one seat apiece). Mazowiecki's Unia, or Democratic Union (which featured many longtime heroes of the Polish intelligentsia opposition), managed to attract the largest single bloc of voters, but that was barely twelve per cent. Directly behind, at just under twelve per cent, came the reconfigured former Communists, severe critics of the Balcerowicz initiatives. In fact, the only party besides Unia that steadfastly maintained its allegiance to the Balcerowicz program—the incumbent Prime Minister Bielecki's Liberal Democratic Party—got just under seven and a half per cent. So a total of less than twenty per cent of the minority who bothered to vote ended up endorsing the current economic program. Solidarity itself fielded a slate of candidates, but they garnered just five per cent of the vote. The Centrum, or Center Alliance, which had originally been formed for the sole purpose of advancing Walesa's Presidential candidacy in 1990 but had subsequently broken violently with its mentor, nevertheless received almost nine per cent of the vote. Other winners, so to speak, included the Christian Nationalists, who ended up claiming the third-largest block of Sejm seats, on the strength of their nine per cent of the vote. (They take particular exception to the endless rhetoric coming from Unia to the effect that the most important thing of all is Poland's early "entry into Europe," whatever that means, insisting instead that Poland needs to retain its distinctly Polish—which is to say, Catholic—essence, whatever *that* means.) A variety of peasant parties, one of which, made up of direct heirs of the formerly Communist-allied Peasants' Party, secured the fourth-largest block of seats. The K.P.N. (Confederation of Independent Poland), consisting of ultra-nationalists ranged behind a self-styled military genius named Leszek Moczulski, who for years had been elaborating his plans for the inevitable eventual war with a suddenly nonexistent Soviet Union, took seven and a half per cent of the vote. And, perhaps most implausible of all, there was the Beer Drinkers' Party, which was originally the brainstorm of a famous comedian but was taken over by a group of somewhat shady entrepreneurs, mostly former *nomenklatura*, who were intent, it was said, on securing the immunity from prosecution which elevation to the Sejm would

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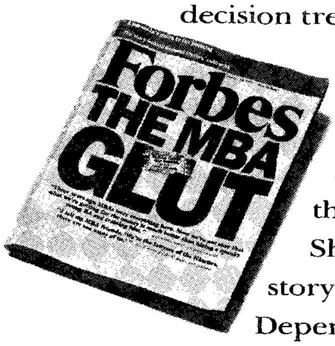

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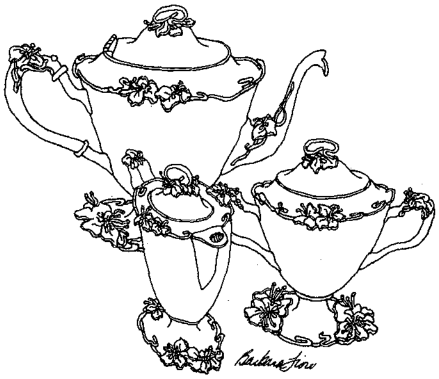
afford them, and sixteen of whom managed to get themselves elected, with a bit over three per cent of the total vote.

The weeks that followed the election were characterized by a series of grim farces, beginning with a protracted brawl over where, from left to right, each of the new deputies was going to sit within the parliamentary chamber, and extending into a seemingly endless agony over just whom they were going to be able to settle upon as their new Prime Minister. That person would have to be able to cobble together a Cabinet (a question of distributing ministerial spoils as much as of developing some fresh new consensus on matters of policy) that could elicit the support of an absolute majority of the new parliament's members, and it was by no means clear at first that such a feat was even mathematically possible. Walesa first indicated a preference for retaining Bielecki as Prime Minister, and subsequently nominated Unia's master tactician, Bronislaw Geremek. Neither of those proposals flew, however, because if there was one thing a majority of the new parliamentarians could agree on it was that they didn't want any prolonging of the Balcerowicz program. Walesa even proposed himself, but there were no takers for that offer, either. One of the difficulties was that nobody knew what Walesa's continuing role was as President, nobody knew what the Prime Minister and his Cabinet were supposed to do, nobody knew what sort of say the parliament was supposed to have. Well over two years into the new era, the ceaselessly bickering factions still hadn't settled on even the bare outline of a constitutional framework.

Meanwhile, Jan Olszewski, an independent veteran-oppositionist lawyer vaguely affiliated with Centrum, was slowly stitching together an improbable coalition, including Centrum and the Christian Nationalists (both of whom seemed intent on some kind of de-Communizing crusade), the post-Communist Peasants' Party (which would presumably find itself among the objects of just such a crusade should one ever get started), Solidarity, an anti-Balcerowicz offshoot of Unia, and, in a virtually kingmaking role, the Beer Drinkers. By late December, to almost everybody's amazement, Olszewski was able to present to the parliament a Cabinet that did succeed in garnering a slim majority vote. When the new Prime Minister was asked what he intended to do with his government, especially in the matter of the economy, he replied that he wished both to accelerate the reforms and to make their impact more gradual—a neat trick, and one that, he went on to explain, would take him and his new team at least two months to work out in detail.

During the ensuing months, the parliament seemed to be pulling in all directions at once, and on several occasions the newborn government seemed to be on the verge of collapsing before it could even issue its economic program. One thing that makes it exceptionally difficult to keep track of political developments in Poland today is that all the standard ideological polarities seem to have been reversed: the country has spawned, as it were, a Friedmanite left and a Keynesian right. For example, Unia leaders, such as Jan Litynski, who tend to express profound reservations about the Church's puritanical encroachments on state prerogatives and who, throughout the Solidarity years, favored egalitarian and broadly redistributive policies aimed at, among other things, succoring the poorest of the poor, these days stake out economic positions that are almost Thatcherite in their orthodoxy. Litynski himself spent a large part of a conversation I had with him ridiculing recent proposals for a luxury tax, which some have been advocating as a way of addressing the polarization of wealth; he called it self-evidently counterproductive and detrimental to growth. I also had a talk with Olszewski's new Labor Minister, the Christian Nationalist Jerzy Kropiwnicki, in which he eloquently expounded the paramount need to ban abortion, increase the Church's presence in public schools, and generally cleanse the public scene, in order to return the country to its fundamental Catholic and Polish roots. (His Christian Nationalist colleague Antoni Macierewicz, the new head of the Interior Ministry, has recently been speaking of the need to imbue the police and security apparatus with militantly Christian values and perspectives). But when I asked Kropiwnicki what he felt the country needed economically, he replied, "Oh, something like your President Roosevelt's New Deal."



Something like Roosevelt's New Deal—widespread state intervention to address the recession as the foremost priority of governing, even at the risk of aggravating the already huge deficit—was more or less what Olszewski seemed to have in mind as well. As the weeks passed, however, the realities of the outside world increasingly impinged on Poland. The I.M.F. and the World Bank weighed in heavily, threatening to upend earlier agreements, in which the country's foreign debt had been considerably reduced and substantial further credits had been advanced, if the new government failed to continue toeing a disciplined austerity line. A battle broke out within Olszewski's own economic team, and ended with the resignation of the new Finance Minister, who was outraged over what he saw as the recklessly inflationary proclivities of his colleagues. After that, Olszewski's government seemed even more schizophrenic in its economic actions and pronouncements. While the next Finance Minister, Andrzej Olechowski, who had held several important posts under the Balcerowicz dispensation, moved quickly to mend fences with the I.M.F. by hacking the budget back within internationally accepted parameters, the chief economic spokesman for the Christian Nationalists, the governing coalition's senior partner, was crowing over how the government was continuing to resist the "unprecedented pressure" of the I.M.F., which was aimed at undermining the country's sovereignty. It was clear that Olechowski was going to be able to succeed in disciplining the budget only to the extent that he could force the various parties in the governing coalition to renounce their campaign pledges, and in some cases their very identities. International bankers and investors and potential joint-venturers of all sorts hung back, unsure whether he was going to be able to do so. Their hesitation, in turn, further aggravated the mounting economic crisis.

As for the political scene, it was falling into yet greater disarray. Unia and Centrum both seemed on the verge of fragmenting, and the Beer Drinkers actually did split up. On some days, Olszewski's own position seemed less and less tenable—how long could he be expected to keep on squaring all these different circles? But on *other* days it seemed that he just might be able to keep doing so for some time. For one thing, the reason Unia was on the verge of splintering was that a sizable faction, led by former Prime Minister Mazowiecki himself, seemed ready to throw in its lot with Olszewski after all, precisely in order to lend the regime more stability during these difficult times. Many of this faction's party colleagues, however, were mortified at the thought of joining any government that included Christian Nationalists—and many Christian Nationalists, for that matter, seemed ready to bolt if any Unia members or their Liberal allies did come on board. As of April, perhaps the main thing keeping the Olszewski government in power was every parliamentarian's fear that its collapse would expose the entire institution to still further public ridicule, and that if the government was forced to call another election it was by no means obvious that *anyone* would show up to vote. In January, as I was leaving Poland, several insiders told me that Walesa was feeling simultaneously hamstrung and superfluous, and was seriously considering resigning. "Any day now," the Solidarity senator Alina Pienkowska assured me knowledgeably. More recently, several commentators have been predicting that the logic of the current impasse is inexorably moving toward only one possible outcome: Walesa's suspension of parliament and assumption of dictatorial powers.

THE other day, I was able to get through by phone to Piotr Bikont, and he had just returned from the stadium. "It has all started up again," he told me. "The Russians, the Ukrainians, the Byelorussians—they're all back, trading away, as if nothing had happened."

Nobody is quite sure what that means.

—LAWRENCE WESCHLER

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Mr. Jelly Roll

“Jelly’s Last Jam,” which opened last week at the Virginia, could well become a Broadway landmark. Written and directed by George C. Wolfe, who was also responsible for “The Colored Museum,” it is both a celebration of the music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an ironic, tough evocation of the complex, embittered, and anything but heroic man who wrote and played that music. The show could also be considered a star vehicle, for the performance of Gregory Hines transcends the boundaries of the musical; his astonishing talent as a dancer is matched by his talent for acting, as he portrays this often cruel and self-defeating man. Born in New Orleans of Creole stock, Morton was boastful, frequently contemptible in his racist denials of his own blackness, and never less than a genius; glancing at Mr. Hines’ face, one can see Morton’s suffering and his incapacity for happiness, along with his gloating at his accomplishment. The book, strong enough to justify the narrative and the characters, the music and the emotions, is Mr. Wolfe’s accomplishment. There has never been anything like it, on or off Broadway.

The action begins on the night of Jelly’s death. As he stands at the brink of Heaven or Hell, someone called Chimney Man (Keith David), huge and in a top hat, takes charge, acknowledging him and delivering a roll call of other great men of jazz. Then we go back to Jelly’s boyhood—the part of young Jelly is played and danced to perfection by young Savion Glover—and to his beginnings as a jazz pianist, in the brothels of Storyville, and on to his later career, in Los Angeles and Chicago, where he formed his own band, the Red Hot Peppers. The other characters, also well cast, include a blues singer, Miss Mamie (Mary Bond Davis), and an astringent grandmother (Ann Duquesnay), who disinherits Jelly for betraying his Creole heritage. Stanley Wayne Mathis is Jack the Bear, Jelly’s best friend, whom he eventually humiliates, and beautiful Tonya Pinkins is Anita, a singer with whom Jelly lived. In addition, there is a remarkable trio, the Hunnies—Mamie Duncan-Gibbs, Stephanie Pope, and Allison M. Williams—who keep pace with the action, step by step.

The always invaluable Luther Henderson has adapted Morton’s music, and contributed music of his own to bind it to the occasion. Susan Birkenhead wrote the apt lyrics. The extraordinary scenery is by Robin Wagner, as lighted by Jules Fisher; the costumes, by Toni-Leslie James, are not only decorative but always appropriate—they are *clothes.* Hope Clark, the inventive choreographer, deserves a review all to herself.

“A Small Family Business,” at the Music Box, is non-vintage Alan Ayckbourn (which is considerably better than the vintage of a lot of other playwrights). A farcical comedy with moral undertones, it is frequently confusing and forced. Nevertheless, there is a lot of fun in it, and it’s my hunch that at least part of my confusion was caused by my laughter at strategic moments. Jack McCracken, portrayed by Brian Murray, is a businessman who has just taken over the family furniture business from his waning and almost senile father-in-law. Addressing his wife’s delighted family at a surprise party, McCracken sets forth his idealistic concept of “simple basic trust,” honesty being the best policy, etc. Then there is a knock at the kitchen door: a private investigator has come about the younger of McCracken’s two daughters, who has been caught shoplifting at a local store. That the investigator is a seedy Anthony Heald does the play no harm, and this episode turns out to be the first of several in which his services are required, because, except for Mr. Murray’s character, there isn’t one member of this family group who has the least idea of “basic trust.” Their sins are manifold, and some are quite kinky and garish. Suddenly, the fun stops: there is a death and, at the end, a girl huddled alone in a bathroom—an ending that made me feel somewhat gypped. When I laugh this much, I don’t want a lesson lurking somewhere.

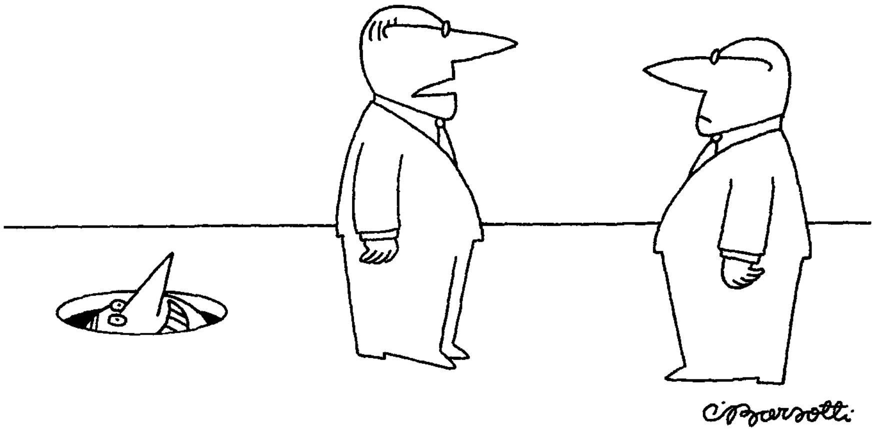
Mr. Murray is especially deft at a kind of part I’ve never seen him play before. I also enjoyed Jane Carr, as his wife; Amelia Campbell, as the young shoplifter; Caroline Lagerfelt, as the kinkiest sinner; and Jake Weber as five Italian businessmen who are up to no good. John Lee Beatty’s ingenious setting for the family houses looks like a large upended checkerboard of rooms upon rooms. The scene is somewhere in England—presumably Mr. Ayckbourn’s home ground, Scarborough. Lynne Meadow directed.

—Edith Oliver

Repeat Performances

That Raul Julia and Sheena Easton are appearing at the Marquis in a road-show revival of “Man of La Mancha” may not sound like cause for rejoicing, but it certainly seemed to thrill the crowd of people who turned out for the press preview I attended. There was an element of fanfare to the event even before the show started, as the P.A. system came alive and a man announced—with the air of one bringing great good news—that the composer himself, a Mr. Mitch Leigh, would be conducting that evening. In fact, Mr. Leigh not only led the orchestra but conducted the overture from a brightly lit spot upstage center. (Oddly enough, the primary producing organization behind the revival is the Mitch Leigh Company.) Even so, it’s the stars that people are going to be curious about. Specifically, they’ll want to know if Miss Easton, who is making her Broadway début, is, as the young man in the television commercial asserts, a babe (the answer is yes, but not in that wig) and how she fares in the role of Aldonza, the lusty whore whom Don Quixote mistakes for Dulcinea (to me she seemed a little refined, but what do I know?). She’s not the most expressive actress in the world, but then Mr. Julia is not the most accomplished singer; they’re well matched in that regard. Miss Easton has a tendency to act with her eyebrows, and Mr. Julia has a tendency to sing with his. It’s a curious singing style, in which you leave the audience in a certain amount of suspense about whether you’ll manage to hit or hold a particular note, but some people like it.

The real question this revival raises is what the producers have on Raul Julia that they can get him to perform the show night after night. He can’t be doing it for the money (no amount of money would be worth it), and it’s not



"Yes, sir, morale is fine."

as though the role of Don Quixote had anything to offer an actor of his stature. Neither is "Man of La Mancha" of any sentimental or historical interest in the context of American musical theatre—the way "The Fantasticks" is, for instance. (One can see Mr. Julia consenting to play El Gallo for a lark.) "Man of La Mancha" has no interest, no charm whatsoever. First produced in 1965, it dates from the precise moment when ersatz drama, ersatz music, and ersatz emotion began to replace whatever cleverness and style had previously been thought the Broadway musical's chief ingredients. With its rambling, intermissionless structure (Cervantes, thrown into prison by the Inquisition, acts out the story of Don Quixote to keep his fellow-inmates from stealing his manuscript), a score that seems mostly strung together from Marlboro commercials, and a script in which lines like "Facts are the enemy of truth" and "There's a remedy for everything but death" pass for irony and wit, "Man of La Mancha" is the granddaddy of all junk musicals. It's where the British got the idea for Andrew Lloyd Webber.

The current revival is in every respect adequate to the occasion. It has floor-miking that plays merry hell with Mr. Leigh's score, and a Sancho (Tony Martinez) who is the cutest thing since Yoda. Mr. Martinez, according to a program note, recently celebrated his two-thousandth performance in the role, and it shows. The program boasts, "Entire Production Staged by Albert Marre." (He directed the original version.) The directorial touches that impressed me most were the choreographed gang-rape sequence, which is particularly tasteful, and the "Moorish" dance, which gives the audience something sexy to look at while Don Quixote is nattering on about beauty and truth.

I'VE never understood the appeal of William Finn's "Marvin" trilogy, about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover. It has a chronology as complicated as the Oedipus cycle and a dramatic sensibility akin to that of the Oresteia. To me, though, it has always seemed like banality set to music.

"Falsettos," at the John Golden, is a chance to see two of the shows—"March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland"—back to back, in a production staged by their original director, James Lapine, and it is strictly for those who care. The first half, the "March of the Falsettos" portion—in which Michael Rupert, Stephen Bogardus, and Chip Zien reprise the roles they created—is the one where Marvin runs off with Whizzer, and Trina hooks up with Marvin's analyst, Mendel, and everybody worries a lot about Marvin and Trina's precocious son, Jason. The second half of the show, the "Falsettoland" portion, is the one where Jason is getting bar mitzvahed, and Whizzer is getting sick, and everybody decides to have the ceremony in the hospital room.

"March of the Falsettos" was first produced in 1981, at the very start of the AIDS epidemic—a time when it must have seemed knowing and hip to acknowledge that the wife and son of a man who was coming out might have feelings about the situation, and when to acknowledge this in a through-sung musical must have seemed very daring indeed. In 1992, Mr. Finn's "Falsettos" pieces seem like an orgy of self-indulgence: shallow, unlikable people expressing themselves in shallow, unlikable songs. One need only remove the homosexual element from "March of the Falsettos"—imagine Marvin leaving his wife and son for another woman—to realize the show's banality. Similarly, one need only imagine "Falsettoland"—which was first produced in 1990 but is set in 1981—taking place a year before or a year later to appreciate how bogus it is and how shamelessly Mr. Finn is exploiting the topicality of AIDS. It's situation-chic—a sort of upper-echelon comedy-melodrama in which no more is required of the characters than that they present a white, upper-middle-class audience with a familiar predicament, and no more is required of that audience than that it respond to something it brought with it to the theatre. "Homosexuals," Chip Zien sings in utter darkness at the start of the second half. It's the very first word, and—totally out of context, hurled into the void—it stops the show.

You can get just as much out of "March of the Falsettos" by listening to the original-cast recording as by seeing it in a theatre—if you can stomach the score, that is. It's strangely bullying music, which dictates to the performers exactly how a song must be sung, and leaves no room for expression, interpretation, or restraint. The current cast does very well under the circumstances—especially Barbara Walsh, who plays the wife and is always likable, and young Jonathan Kaplan, who plays Jason and can't be having much fun. Mr. Bogardus, whose character says things like "Winning is everything to me—except sex and money" and is supposed to be redeemed by premature death, acquits himself fairly well, while Mr. Rupert, who has some of the worst songs to put over, does what he can with Marvin—a man who can't relinquish center stage even when his lover is dying.

There's not really much difference between "Man of La Mancha" and Mr. Finn's amorphous, intermissionless musicals. Both shows are about offering an audience a pleasing image of itself. "Falsettos" is just appealing to a more sophisticated audience, perpetuating a more sophisticated sort of hypocrisy—the idea that shallow, unlikable people become interesting or noble through knowing someone who has died of AIDS.

—MIMI KRAMER

DANCING

While the Music Lasts

WHO'S your favorite choreographer of all time? It's likely he or she was alive ten years ago; chances are he or she is dead now. At this point in the history of dance, it's easy to be gloomy, and, not least in New York, many people are. Among the pessimistic remarks you can hear are: Ballet is dying, modern dance is dying, America no longer leads the world in dance, New York is no longer the world's dance capital. And these views are connected to larger statements: The American century is drawing to its close, New York has slipped into irreversible decline, Eurocentric culture is moribund, and so on. There are further facts to consider: leading dance companies have changed artistic directors, beloved dancers have retired, sublime dances are diminished—the list goes on.

It doesn't help New York's gloommongers that much of the dancing that the rest of the world associates with this city is often seen elsewhere long before it arrives here. More than ten years ago, Twyla Tharp began to lengthen the gaps between her company's New York seasons; "Nine Sinatra Songs," her 1982 hit, did not reach this city till 1984. Trisha Brown's latest work, "For M.G.: The Movie," will not be shown to the New York public before 1993, though it was seen and admired abroad last year. And Mikhail Baryshnikov, who founded his modern-dance White Oak Dance Project in 1990, has toured with it in the South, in the Midwest, in the West, in Boston, in Europe. But not in New York, even though part of the repertory for its last tour was created and rehearsed here. It's a bit like the Ballets Russes, which performed everywhere except in Russia.

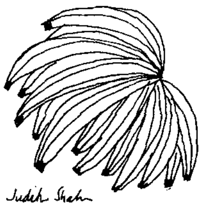
The gloom isn't merely local—it's also historical. Dance has died before now, and the fact that it has always risen from the ashes isn't as comforting as it sounds. For if we loved dance in one incarnation, we may well resist it in its next. One era ended in 1789, when the Paris ballerina Marie Guimard retired (a month before the Revolution). For more than a quarter of a century, she had been an icon of the ancien régime. Today, we can read about this with complacency, because to us the main dance event of 1789 was the première, in Bordeaux, of "La Fille Mal Gardée." Made by the Beaumarchais of dance, Jean Dauberval, this was the first important ballet to be set among ordinary working folk in the contemporary world. *La danse est morte, vive la danse.* But that isn't how things felt at the time. In 1816, Guimard's husband wrote in dismay that "the dance of today bears no resemblance to what I saw from 1770 until 1790 or '92. . . . Dance talent has nothing to do with knowing how to perform every kind of step, in time, to some uninteresting rhythm." Paris remained the center of dance for a few more decades, but its stars began increasingly to be foreign, some of its most promising choreographers fled to work abroad, and the centers of choreographic activity began to be located elsewhere. Has a similar story begun here in New York?

"Well, if I didn't send away for an entry application to the cat show, and you *didn't send away for an entry application, who did?"*

MARK MORRIS was catapulted into stardom in New York in 1984. The gloom era had just begun, and here was an amusing choreographer to brighten it—one full of history, too. The timing seemed very neat. Too neat, some said, viewing his ascent through blue- or green-tinted spectacles; too little refinement, too many jokes, too derivative. But Morris has kept pouring forth an astonishing abundance of valuable works. The debate about him continues; there is no livelier subject for discussion in dance today. He has twice moved away from the city—once back to his home town, Seattle, for a year, once to Brussels for three years—and each time he has taken his dancers with him. As I recall, the latter departure in particular was interpreted by some as a knell for New York. Morris & Co., however, kept making return visits here, bringing five of the new works—if you count the dances in "The Death of Klinghoffer"—that he had made in Brussels. He has had no greater triumph than the 1990 Brooklyn Academy performances of his 1988 full-length "L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato." Last year, he and his company left Brussels. As it says on the latest Morris T-shirts, "They're back."

Morris's recent two-week season at the Manhattan Center Grand Ballroom plunged its audience straight into his bewildering diversity. The season demonstrated how he grew in the well-subsidized conditions afforded him in

Belgium, reminded us how accomplished his dancemaking was before he went there, and furnished the latest evidence of his huge, entertaining, and ambiguous talent. The first week's program had six works, all to live music, excellently played and sung. The eclectic range of scores brought back the way, in the early and mid-eighties, when Morris was emerging, his programs used to make you feel: how could a taste in music be both so broad and so acute? The second week had four pieces, three to taped American songs, the other to silence. The profusion of both programs amounted to too much and too little. I came away wondering, as often before: Who *is* Mark Morris?



One of the more disconcerting facets of Morris is the eternal student. (I can't think of another important choreographer who would title a work "Canonic 3/4 Studies," or anything like.) His works proclaim whom he's been learning from, and especially the great moderns: Duncan, Denishawn, Graham, Cunningham, Taylor. "A Lake," to Haydn's Second Horn Concerto, is Morris in academe. That he began it in Brussels and completed it in Florida—for the White Oak Dance Project—is neither here nor there. Its real setting is Bennington, the college that in the thirties and forties brought America's leading modern-dance artists and numerous teachers together for its annual summer school, and made modern dance academically disseminable throughout the nation. Here are Bennington's clean lines, firm angles, strict rhythms, tidy organization. (Even when Morris breaks the rules. Heaven knows what Graham, let alone Doris Humphrey, would have made of the way Keith Sabado lies like a corpse, half into the wings, from the end of the first movement until well into the second. Finally, he's dragged off by unseen hands.) Morris has caught, from early in the first movement, the music's tread. The dancers keep walking briskly onto the beat, planting the full foot on the floor. They look wholly twentieth-century, and yet baroque, too. "A Lake" is ingeniously constructed. Frequently, you see three or more separate groups moving simultaneously in different ways, and the harmonies you feel between them are strangely close to those in the music. Certain motifs recur with baffling emphasis; certain tableaux are loaded with mysterious formal drama. Morris has developed his presentation of individuals within the group and his mastery of both allegro and (especially) adagio. And yet "A Lake" doesn't get under your skin, partly because it only occasionally seems to attend to the two most obvious facts about this score: that it is a concerto, and that it is for a horn.

In his new duet, "Beautiful Day," Morris is far from his studies. This male and female are suspended between motion and stillness, deed and contemplation; and their body language is, entrancingly, of the oddest. She lies horizontal; he gently picks her up and lowers her down. She stands; he curls around her feet so that she may tilt away, the figurehead to his deck. The music is the sacred cantata "Schlage doch, gewünschte Stunde," which is by either J. S. Bach or Georg-Melchior Hoffmann. It features the ringing of a single soft bell, which Morris marks by various versions of the same gesture: one dancer "chimes" the other's body with both hands. The gesture suggests love both human and divine—"With thy body I Thee worship"—and its beauty is that the hands then open out, as if describing the widening circles of the bell's resonance.

And there is Morris the folk dancer. "Polka," another new work, is both comic and furious; it unleashes the rage of Lou Harrison's Grand Duo for Violin and Piano and gives it the circle-dance thunder one would like to find in any stage version of "Le Sacre du Printemps." Dressed in short chitons, the dancers shake their locks like maenads, fling their wrists to and fro, squat, stand, slap their hips, stamp or pound the floor, re-form into two connecting semicircles, into two crossing horizontal rows, and shake their fists to a rapid regular metre that spices the frenzy with fun. It's a Keystone pyrrhic.

Morris's response to his music is never simple, and it transcends Bennington in that it is never the hollow formalism of music visualization. The dramas glimpsed beneath the calm surface of "A Lake" are one sign of his artistic character. Another is the beginning of "Gloria," the important 1984 work set to Vivaldi's Gloria. This season, the music was sung with mar-

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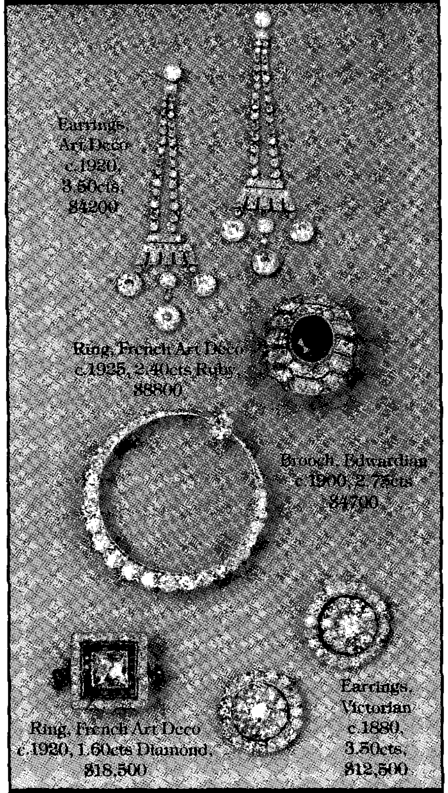
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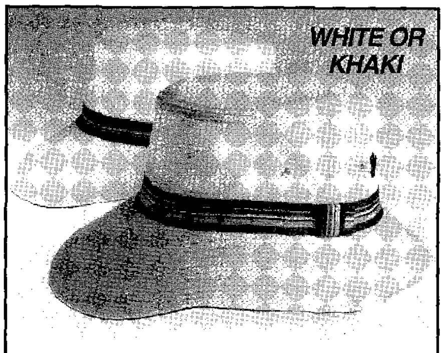

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vellously light texture by the New York Virtuoso Singers (Julianne Baird and Mary Westbrook-Geha were the soloists), with Michael Feldman conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's. During the first section, all Morris shows you is one brief image of movement. A man is on the floor, chest down, beside a woman standing upright, one hand crossed over onto her opposite hip: the beetle and the Amazon. They advance toward you, he inching forward with his arms, literally marching on his stomach, she walking in heavy, jerky paces. As she accelerates, he rises, arches back, and falls. Then the lights go out, while the music continues. This image—suggesting the low and the powerful, ascent and collapse, pilgrims' progresses, people fixed in their paths without addressing each other—prepares you for much that will follow, and the blackout helps to lock it in your mind. The way that it is set starkly *against* the chorus's call of "Gloria" while catching something of the over-all shape of the choral phrase and the more solemn tone of the orchestra is Morris's secret. He dwells inside and outside his music at the same time. I think that he has learned to dwell much further inside a score since "Gloria," but the human ups and downs it depicts are vividly blended. It is an emblem work.

The tension between sight and sound in "Gloria" reflects the tension between Morris's musicality and his world view. For he is also a powerful moralist—not least, by negation, in the private fetishistic hells of "Lovey"—and he keeps expounding and enlarging his vision. You can't miss that sixties utopianism. In one paradigmatic device, occurring in "Gloria," "L'Allegro," and elsewhere, Morris has identical partnering done by four couples: male-female, female-female, female-male, and male-male. All sexualities are equal. He is insistent not that men and women are interchangeable but that they can be presented with the same significance. In this he differs profoundly from ballet, which he has often sought to deconstruct. No one has been more artistically successful in ridding the female form onstage of the symbolic quality that has traditionally (in modern dance, too) attached to it. A wry example of this occurs when, at the start of "Prelude and Prelude," the curtains part to reveal a diagonal line of ten dancers. They're all braced in profile to us, in tendu back, holding fans. It's like something from one of Marius Petipa's Spanish ballets—except that there are both male and female dancers, and they all wear leotards. Not for a moment does what follows resemble Petipa. The music is Henry Cowell's Set of Two for Harpsichord and Violin, and the dance is essentially a contrast between staccato and legato. One dancer (a different one at each performance) leaves the line and, arriving on stage right (fan clenched between the teeth), pursues a peculiar solo of slow moves and positions that correspond to the violin's strange melody. The nine other dancers, without departing from their diagonal formation, echo the harpsichord's percussive tones in overlapping series of positions and gestures. Then, after a brief blackout, the music is played again. This time, it is the nine who echo the violin, the soloist who matches the harpsichord—except that the soloist can only move singly while the nine still move serially. So systematic, so bizarre, so embarrassingly satisfying.

In the taped-sound program, "Songs That Tell a Story," "Lovey," and "Going Away Party" treat songs by, respectively, the Louvin Brothers, the Violent Femmes, and Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys with just as much seriousness and irony. Only "Going Away Party," a pithy satire of Texas-cowtown heterosexual fatuities, is new to New York. Here Morris, with his hair slicked right back and his mouth gaping in outsized cheerfulness, looks (a friend remarked) just like Lyndon Johnson: perfect. I relish the dirty puns Morris makes on the words ("feel your lips on mine"), I cherish the steps, and I love the skill with which he has arranged some ensembles in changing symmetries for seven dancers. I don't care, however, for the whiff of self-pity in the way he makes himself the outsider at this straight party. In "Ten Suggestions," "Songs That Tell a Story," and this, he was dancing with timing, audacity, and mischief as brilliant as ever. But he could stand to lose at least thirty pounds, especially for "Ten Suggestions"; there's a loss of clarity. He's the greatest overweight dancer alive.

This season had its problems. On press night, the lighting for "Behemoth" went badly awry. Though several dancers were reaching new personal highs, a few were off form. With one cast, the horrific "Lovey" had never looked better; with another, it looked soggy. The Morris company is having to work now without the ample resources it enjoyed in Brussels, and I wish that New York could improve this situation—for its own sake.

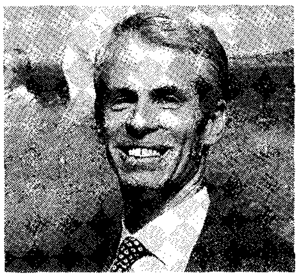
I don't say that Mark Morris is the gateway to the future; it is not a critic's job to make predictions. How much he is a choreographer of and for our time is something I continue to learn. I do say that right now he and Merce Cunningham are the only leading choreographers on whom the surrounding dance gloom has in no way rubbed off, and that a number of Morris's works show true genius. Much about his choreography looks familiar—but never for long. And there is no single correct way for us to react. Time and again his dances have left me thinking, I've never felt this way before.

As when I watch "Behemoth." This bleak and tremendous work has no sound accompaniment. Morris has applied several Cunningham principles here. Allegro, adagio, and stasis coexist onstage, and dancers switch between them; stage space is decentralized; the movement is a dark blend of ballet and modern. But whereas Cunningham without music roams free through the world, Morris without music is a house without windows—almost air without oxygen. Ever since I first saw this piece, I have connected it to the casebook studies of Parkinson's disease described in Oliver Sacks's book "Awakenings," where one patient describes her condition as "wooden, mechanical . . . unmusicked." Sacks also traces a crucial connection between music and human locomotion in "A Leg to Stand On." But there are particular features of "Behemoth" that link it for me to the Parkinsonism described in "Awakenings," and all of them strike me as unprecedented in Morris's choreography: the way a sound (feet hitting the floor, hands clapping) can suddenly cue someone out of immobility; the ability to sustain a steady speed in motion once it has commenced; the sense that the motion is involuntary and forced; the return to a stiff, caved-in, kyphotic stance; the sudden freeze in mid-gesture, with raised or lowered eyes; the rapid tremor of hands. "Behemoth" isn't a literal representation of Parkinsonism; I mean simply that it is a plotless dance refraction of its essence. Not wholly plotless, actually. As the work progresses, we sense the dogged resilience of the human will beneath this initially involuntary movement. Metres and rhythms cohere more firmly. At the end, the dancers, lying on the floor, slowly sit up. This act, in the context, has the quality of heroism. Surely not even Morris could make such a work again; it would be like recrossing the Styx for a second helping.

YOU have to travel to keep up with New York dance. The White Oak Dance Project's first three tours, in 1990 and 1991, consisted entirely of choreography by Morris, who also provided two new works for the company. The dancers included a number of New York's most distinguished modern-dance performers. For some of them, as for Baryshnikov, the company has offered a new lease on life. White Oak still dances several pieces by Morris but has expanded its repertory to include works by Martha Graham, Jane Dudley, Paul Taylor, Lar Lubovitch, Meredith Monk, David Gordon, and Martha Clarke. On its recent European tour, the company did not promise that Baryshnikov would dance every night (though he did), and gave short notice of what would be performed. You could book to see two evenings not knowing whether you'd catch different material each time or the same twice. Still, the company presented sometimes as many as seven works a night, Baryshnikov customarily danced in four of them, and ovations were warm.

In London in early April, I saw White Oak in a quintuple bill. It happens that the fare included two Morris pieces ("A Lake" and "Ten Suggestions") that I saw danced by Morris's own company here, later that same week. It also happens that the program included two by Lubovitch, one of which I saw, the very same week, in Lubovitch's six-day season at the City Center. Comparisons were instructive. Several White Oak dancers have often appeared with Morris, but in general the simpler passages of "A Lake," as White Oak danced them, became more schematic and less spon-

TALES OF AN ART DEALER



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Odyssey to Guatemala

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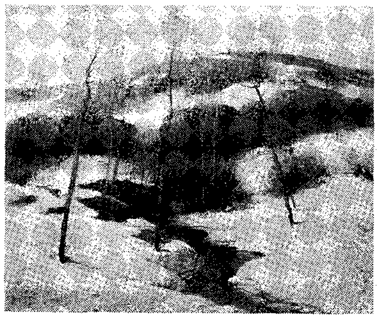

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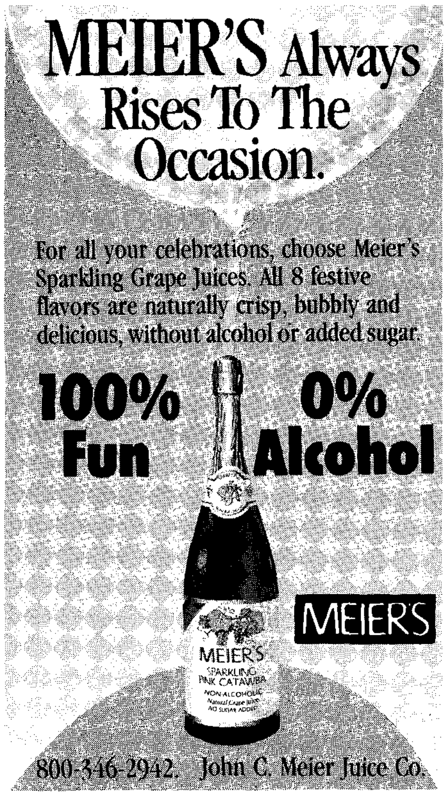

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taneous; the dancier the choreography grew, the better the White Oak dancers were. By contrast, the same dancers, Baryshnikov included, conferred a simplicity of manner and a beautiful fullness of tone on Lubovitch's "Waiting for the Sunrise" that the choreographer's own company lacked. It's hard to tell how good Lubovitch's dancers are in potential, but his presentation of them is dismal. Facial expressions are beefed up, but bodily alignment is made blurry. (Likewise, when I last saw them do his Philip Glass piece, "North Star," they were much less exact and juicy than the Alvin Ailey dancers performing it.) "Waiting for the Sunrise" is a light piece to fifties songs by Johnny Puleo and His Harmonica Gang, and Les Paul and Mary Ford. Watching the home troupe in it, you saw the same old corny Lubovitch, but with White Oak you saw a new side of him: deadpan and innocent.

How strange—to watch such dancers as Kate Johnson, Cathy McCann, Kenneth Tosti, John Gardner, Valda Setterfield, Rob Besserer, Donald Mouton, and Carol Parker, all of whom the rest of the world associates with New York, and to know they are appearing in a program that there are as yet no plans to show here. Baryshnikov danced in his most modest manner, never stealing attention, always loyal to the choreography. Though he may have conceived White Oak as a way of extending his own career, that's not what comes across. He and Gardner even danced the boy-meets-boy duet from Lubovitch's Mozart "Concerto Six Twenty-two," and brought to it new sculptural force and firmness of phrasing. Watching Morris and Baryshnikov dance "Ten Suggestions" two days apart was like watching Elssler and Taglioni competing in the same role. Morris is heavy, hilarious, American, modern; Baryshnikov is pulled up, laconic, Russian, modernist. He looks about twenty-two onstage, and his slightest move is dazzlingly pellucid. All he has to do is lift his hat with both hands, hold it first above his head and then on one side—and he's brought a rare waft of beauty and irony into the world.

IT is noteworthy that some of New York's (and the world's) most beloved choreographers have not been at their best in the last few years. Terpsichore hasn't been any too prodigal with her bounty of late. Jerome Robbins has made no major work since 1988. Twyla Tharp, despite occasional triumphs, has not generally been working at her highest level. Paul Taylor, whose company has also started to give shorter seasons in New York, has seldom in his new works struck gold, or even bronze. I saw the White Oak troupe perform his latest work, a meandering part narrative, part divertissement called "Oz," to a taped score by Wayne Horvitz and Robin Holcomb. Dorothy (Kate Johnson) comes to stay with her cousin Zeb (John Gardner, in dungarees). Then a motley assortment of characters arrive and dance, half as entertainment, half alarmingly. Finally, a Daughter of the Rainbow enters, with huge wings, and catches everybody in her Loie Fuller-like fabric. Johnson alone breaks free, and she starts to mime singing (exceptionally well), on which note the curtain falls. I may have made it sound more spruce and coherent than it looked at the time.

In "Oz"—as in "Fact and Fancy," a piece he made last year for his own company—Taylor seems to be working without his customary sense of structure, of irony, of musicality. It's as if he'd made these works in his sleep, though he still shows a dim, gut-level sense of entertainment. But in another piece he made for his dancers last year, "Company B," to Andrews Sisters songs, he was wide awake. He hasn't been in such good form in at least half a dozen years. Like "Sunset," his 1985 classic, it is about men and women in America during wartime, and it is sprinkled with men's injuries and deaths. But where "Sunset" was lyrical, "Company B" is comic; to see them on the same Taylor program, as was possible last fall, is fascinating. In "Company B," flirtations are very bright, and sexism has an exuberant blatancy. This work is really about—if a Taylor work can ever be said to be about only one thing—how men and women keep up their spirits when sudden death may be just around the corner. An astonishing solo for Andrew Asnes, to "Tico Tico," catches all that, thrillingly. Sometimes he falls as if hit by gunfire and bounces right back into exhilarated virtuoso dancing, all in a single ardent phrase. At each performance, you could feel the gloom lifting.

—ALASTAIR MACAULAY

MUSICAL EVENTS

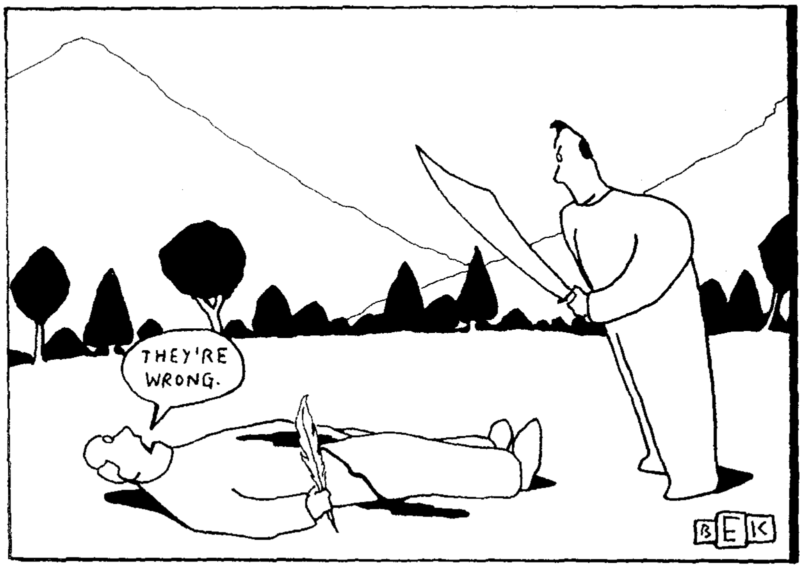
Chimborazo, Cotopaxi

CHRISTOPH VON DOHNÁNYI became the music director of the Cleveland Orchestra in 1984, and before long the orchestra regained the preëminence that it had known in George Szell's day. It has become the American orchestra most often recorded. It won the 1989 ASCAP award for adventurous programming, yet plays to more people than ever before. This summer, it begins a regular residency at the Salzburg Festival. Next season, it embarks on a "Ring," in concert, which will be recorded by London. Moreover, it has managed to sustain success, year after year, without loss of artistic integrity and with only a small loss of artistic enterprise. Mr. Dohnányi frankly admits the need when the orchestra is on tour to consider the box-office and the exhortations of record companies ("Would you do something we're just issuing"). The repertory on a 1989 European tour contained Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto, Schubert's Ninth Symphony, Brahms's First, and Mahler's Fifth, but also works by Janáček, Schoenberg, Webern, Delius, Tippett. The programs of the two concerts the orchestra gave in Carnegie Hall last month contained Beethoven's Fifth Symphony and Schumann's Fourth, but also works by Webern and Varèse, and a new piece, Herbert Willi's Concerto for Orchestra. Cleveland has usually brought to Carnegie each year at least one fine, large work not often heard: Berio's "Coro" (in 1980, when Lorin Maazel was music director), "Die Jakobsleiter" (in 1984), "Taras Bulba" and "Erwartung" (both in 1985), Busoni's Piano Concerto (in 1989), Henze's "The Bassarids" (in 1990). This year, it was Varèse's "Ecuatorial," which is large in sound and spirit, if not in forces or duration.

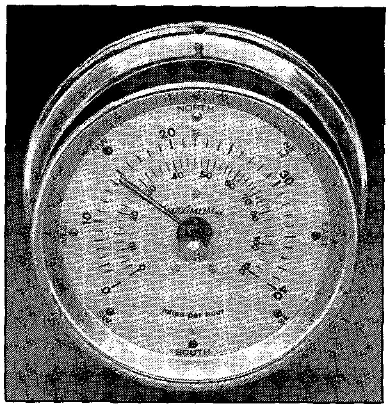
"Ecuatorial" was first heard in 1934, in Town Hall; some twenty-five years passed before it was heard again. In a preface to the score, Varèse wrote, "The title is merely suggestive of the regions where pre-Columbian art flourished. I conceived the music as having something of the same elemental rude intensity of those strange, primitive works." There is a text, from the "Popol Vuh": a simple, noble tribal prayer to the Great Spirits, which the composer found in Asturias's "Legends of Guatemala." He set it originally for a solo bass (he is said to have had Chaliapin in mind) but published the score, in 1961, with the line assigned to choral basses. The instrumentation is for four trumpets, four trombones, a percussion battery manned by six players, piano, organ, and two electronic instruments able to soar to heights even piccolos cannot reach. (In 1934, they were Theremins; later these were replaced by the more reliable Ondes Martenot.) "Ecuatorial," which lasts about twelve minutes, affords a conservative audience its readiest approach to the genius of Varèse. (The Philharmonic has billed it only once—in 1974, when Boulez conducted.) It is picturesque, with its exotic bird calls and its sonorous evocation of craggy peaks, and the cadenced, rhetorical, Psalm-like text makes it easy to follow. The work owes something to Villa-Lobos, who was big in Paris, and close to Varèse, in the years before "Ecuatorial" was written. In its musical depiction of religious awe before Mighty Powers and their manifestations in Nature it looks forward to Messiaen. But this is a tougher, less ethnic score than any by Villa-Lobos, and the music is less repetitive and harmonically less lush than any by Messiaen. The timbres of the piano and of the organ can prove disconcerting, it is true, for the instruments have associations neither outdoor nor pre-Columbian. The electronic whistles and whines, now shrill, now sweet, have become familiar and have often been debased since the nineteen-thirties, when they were new and exciting sound material for a composer to build with. But the power of Varèse's music remains, and the Cleveland instrumentalists—who were wide-spaced around the edges of the Carnegie platform, not clustered—played "Ecuatorial" with force and beauty.

Mr. Dohnányi had chosen the solo-bass version. His soloist, Siegmund Nimsgern, was score-bound and lacked passion; it was as if Rossini's or Schoenberg's Moses were to recite, in well-molded tones and with artistic care, from the book rather than from his soul. In fact, I have never heard a performance of "Ecuatorial" in which the prayer was urgent and fiery; both the bass soloist of Arthur Weisberg's recording and the bass chorus of Pierre Boulez's are conventional and civilized. (Varèse, his biographer Fernand Ouellette tells us, had in mind a voice amplified by a megaphone to more than mortal grandeur; and in the preface to the score the composer wrote, "The execution should be dramatic and incantatory, guided by the imploring fervor of the text.") But the Cleveland brasses blazed, the percussions sizzled and shuddered; before and around us mountains raised their heads, lightnings flashed, thunder crashed, and strange birds sang.

The program that included "Ecuatorial" began with Webern's late-Romantic idyll "Im Sommerwind," a piece as accomplished in its way as Sinding's "Rustle of Spring." There's the difference that Sinding was forty when he composed his



THEY SAY THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD.



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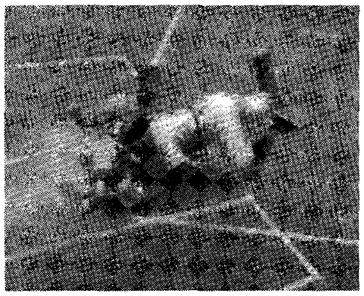

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best-known work, in 1896, whereas Webern was only twenty-one when, in 1904, he composed "Im Sommerwind"; he went on to create music more important. Mr. Dohnányi and the Cleveland Orchestra plan to record all Webern's orchestra music; their exquisite account of the student piece lays a good foundation. Schumann's Fourth followed, then "Ecuatorial" and Ravel's "La Valse." The last was, in its way, superbly played, but I thought it overconducted, unaristocratic, needlessly noisy. In avoiding mere attractiveness, in making sure no one would miss the elegant ironies—"*Waltzing across the tightrope As if there were no death*"—Mr. Dohnányi underlined.

The second concert brought the new work, a joint commission from the Salzburg Festival and the Cleveland Orchestra. Willi, born in 1956 and so too young for Grove (which passes directly from Pamela Willetts, the muse of British Library music manuscripts, to William of Hirsau and William of Newark), is an Austrian composer whose name has been turning up at European festivals. Catchy titles stick; his "Froschmäusekrieg" ("Battle of the Frogs and the Mice"), which Claudio Abbado conducted in Vienna three years ago, joins Aaron Jay Kernis's "Dream of the Morning Sky" and David Lang's "Eating Living Monkeys." But at this first encounter with Willi's music I thought him a plain, somewhat plodding inventor, conscientiously employing the Cleveland skills in a brief (about ten-minute), uninspired construction.

Cleveland playing is distinguished by uncommonly pure intonation, excellence of individual tones, ideal balance, and perfect ensemble. The second concert began with Haydn's Symphony No. 12, in a poised, very well played performance, continued with Stravinsky's Violin Concerto (the least lovable of his neoclassical compositions), which was cleanly dispatched by Itzhak Perlman, and ended with Beethoven's Fifth. I have long revered Mr. Dohnányi as an inspiring champion—like Colin Davis—of music that needs advocacy: I first heard him conducting Schreker's "Der Ferne Klang," in Cassel in 1964, then the premières of Henze's "Der Junge Lord," in Berlin in 1965, and "The Bassarids," in Salzburg in 1966. And I have written often about my sometimes less ardent response to his performances of the standard repertory—always sterling, impeccably executed, compelling of admiration, but . . . Instead of trying once again to define that "but," I reach for a copy of the *Gramophone* to see what younger colleagues hear. The June, 1989, number comes to hand; Dohnányi recordings reviewed that month are of four Beethoven symphonies, five Mendelssohn symphonies, Brahms's four, Bruckner's Ninth, and Mahler's Fifth. Four different critics assess them. They agree on the exceptionally good orchestral playing, on the seriousness and worth of the interpretations, on much else. The reviewer of the Brahms symphonies—a collected edition of four recordings that he has already reviewed individually, during the previous two years—confesses that he "had retained no distinct memory of any one performance." Rehearing reminds him of Mr. Dohnányi's "self-effacing" and "objective" approach: "Everything is in place. Each tempo is well-chosen, the phrasing is always sensibly managed and no detail obtrudes." He wishes for "a little more individuality in the playing," notes "a slight impression of blandness," and concludes that "there are better versions of each work available." The Mendelssohn set, another collection of earlier issues, prompts its critic to comparisons with Abbado, who "gives the more affectionate performances, pointed more subtly." On Beethoven's Second the judgment is that "when everything is taken into account—all the various tempos, repeats, recorded quality—the Dohnányi is probably the safest recommendation"; the outer movements of the Fourth "are played quickly after the manner of Toscanini or Karajan, but without Toscanini's or Karajan's ability to create spaces for lyric reflection within the larger drama." The account of Mahler's Fifth is compared with versions by Barbirolli and Bernstein; in the funeral march Mr. Dohnányi is "strict, expressionless, detached," and "the effect is to clip, to manicure, to undermine Mahler's very distinctive phraseology"; in the second movement he is "simply too tidy and well scrubbed by half, his precision somehow incompatible with the very nature of the music." Only the performance of Bruckner's Ninth is praised in terms that quicken a reader's interest: "What I find compelling about Dohnányi's reading of the first movement is the sense it conveys of enormous pent-up tensions pervading the music, like a river running high, swirling and eddying along its course and never far from overwhelming us in some catastrophic inundation. . . . A performance full of urgency and danger, spontaneously alive to the music's perturbed mood." The Cleveland Orchestra is "very fine, full of eloquence, more uncompromising in passages of near-dissonance, the playing grainier and rhythmically more nervous" than that of the Berlin Philharmonic (in a Karajan performance).

THE Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center offered an agreeable program last week. It began with Britten's Sinfonietta, Opus 1, which he composed in 1932, when he was eighteen. Analogies between the Sinfonietta and Schoenberg's First Chamber Symphony have often been remarked; the works are kin not in character but in their insistence on formal coherence through a wide variety of contrasting moods. The Sinfonietta (composed in twenty days) had been preceded by an expansive, somewhat loosely knit string quartet (composed in twenty-six days of 1931); Britten's teacher, Frank Bridge, complained that its counterpoint was "too vocal." The ingenious Sinfonietta, dedicated to Bridge, employs tight, brief themes (more interesting in their workings than in themselves) and lucid, concentrated forms. It is lighter, more transparent (and less substantial) than the Chamber Symphony: Britten uses five strings and five winds, Schoenberg five strings and ten winds (including English horn, bass clarinet, and contrabassoon).

Oliver Knussen's "Songs Without Voices," commissioned by the Society, had its première. The score bears a completion date one day before the concert. The four songs (there may be more to come, Knussen says) are marked fantastico, maestoso, leggiero, and adagio e rubato. The composer's program note reveals that some of them are syllable-by-syllable instrumental settings of poems; perhaps the cryptic inscriptions affixed to the first three—"Winter's Foil," "Prairie Sunset," "First Dandelion"—provide clues to what they are. The fourth grows from a poignant English-horn melody that Knussen composed on hearing of the death of Andrzej Panufnik. The forces are flute, English horn, clarinet, horn, string trio, and piano, and Knussen writes for them with the delicate fancy that marks all his music: filigree, birdsong, fine embroidery, some affecting harmony.

Berio's wind quintet "Ricorrenze" had its first New York performance. This is an extension, to about sixteen minutes, of "Terre Chaleureuse," the sketch that Berio wrote for Boulez's sixtieth birthday; with all too many "recurrences," it struck me as more a process piece than a pleasure. Mr. Knussen conducted the Britten, Busoni's "Berceuse Élégiaque" (in Schoenberg's chamber arrangement), and his own "Songs." A Mozart basset-horn trio (played by two clarinets and bassoon) and Debussy's String Quartet completed the bill.

"I DUE FOSCARI," Verdi's sixth opera, was the final presentation this season of Eve Queler and her Opera Orchestra of New York, in Carnegie Hall. Good choice, valuable offering: the opera merits no place in the standard repertory but is worth hearing from time to time. (The Rome Opera brought it to the Met in 1968; the Riverside Orchestra gave a concert performance in 1975; Miss Queler did it in 1981, with Carlo Bergonzi and Renato Bruson as the Foscari; last year there was an Amato production.) In this opera, but never again, Verdi used identifying motifs, musical *cartes de visite*, bluntly and insistently. He dropped too often into triple time or a lilting 6/8. (At the Vienna première, in 1845, the audience laughed when the tense prison scene of Act II broke into a waltz.) But there are also refined episodes—when ordering the libretto from Piave, Verdi described the subject as "delicate and full of pathos"—and there is some attractive, imaginative scoring. Miss Queler's soloists were Martile Rowland, Eduardo Villa, and Vladimir Chernov (who has a firm, ringing baritone). They were hardly refined—they tended to scream or roar, even in intimate conversations and confidential monologues, and to hang on to any high notes without regard for musical or verbal expression—but they were spirited and were much applauded. In the small role of Barbarigo, Evan Bowers revealed a clear, unforced, promising tenor.

—ANDREW PORTER

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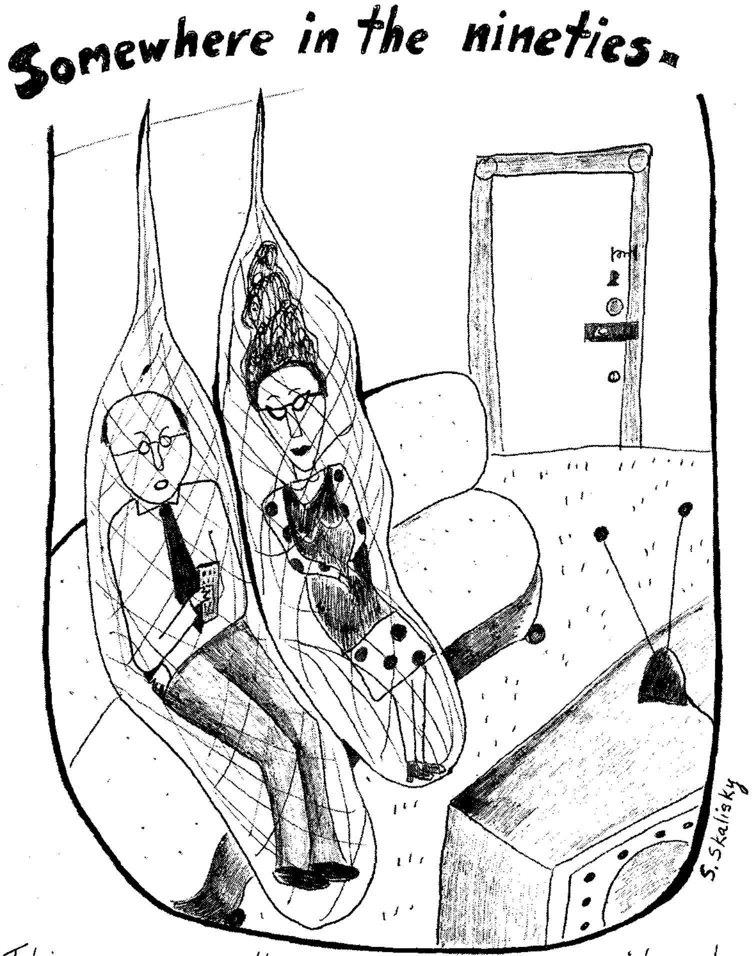
AROUND CITY HALL

Hot Dogs and Elephants

A DISPASSIONATE (and self-deluded) historian, taking the long view, might assume that in a season in which a *Times* lead article reported a "momentous discovery" that supported the Big Bang explanation of the birth of the universe—the second deck of the headline on April 24th was "DISCOVERY OF WRINKLES IN SPACE YIELDS CLUE TO DEVELOPMENT OF GRAVITY AND COSMOS"—this dramatic reminder of the barely measurable significance of the era dominated by the human race in the history of the universe might have some effect, for a week or so, anyhow, on other news deemed worthy of attending to. However, if the various managements (including that of the *Times*) want to sell papers, such news necessarily reflects the interests of most readers, so it was all pretty much the mixture as before. The papers reported at length on Leona Helmsley's adjustment to her new life as an inmate in the Lexington, Kentucky, federal prison, where she had been sent on April 15th, even though her lawyer, Alan Dershowitz, had argued that she should at least be allowed to spend the Passover holidays—which he described as "literally her Last Supper"—with her family. Large headlines brought the news that both the Trumps—Donald and Ivana—were negotiating to have talk shows of their own. On April 27th, Mayor David Dinkins held a dinner at the Sheraton New York hotel at which he raised nearly a million dollars for his 1993 reëlection campaign. "DAVE REAPS A MILLION, RAKES FOES AT BUX BASH," announced the next day's *Daily News* headline. The foes raked were Dinkins' presumed rivals in next year's race: Andrew Stein, president of the City Council, who would be opposing him in the Democratic primary, and Rudolph Giuliani, who as the 1989 Republican nominee almost defeated him. Two major local labor leaders who had been scheduled to attend the Dinkins dinner did not show up: Stanley Hill, the head of District Council 37, the city's largest municipal-employees union, and the co-chairman of the event, and Sandra Feldman, the head of the United Federation of Teachers, who objected to what they saw as Dinkins' slighting of public-service needs and education in his budget for the next fiscal year, which had been handed out at City Hall that morning. Another no-show, and one whose name came up often at the party, was Arnold Biegen, the finance chairman for Dinkins' 1989 campaign—a role he had also played in the reëlection campaign until it was discovered, last winter, that he had stolen a hundred and fifty-eight thousand dollars, which constituted a large share of the campaign funds then in hand. Presumably, the latest contributions would be in more responsible keeping. Despite the Biegen problem, and the defection of the two union leaders, who had played major roles in his winning 1989 campaign, Dinkins was all smiles as he tapped his foot to "Take the A Train" and, of course, "New York, New York."

Some paid-for seats at the fund-raiser were not occupied by the Dinkins supporters who bought them, and everyone understood that, as rabid hockey fans, they must instead be down at Madison Square Garden, where the New York Rangers were in hot contention for the Stanley Cup, the National Hockey League equivalent of the World Series trophy. A championship trophy in any sport is highly treasured, but none would be more so this year than the Stanley Cup if the Rangers could carry it off. If in the end it eluded them, however, many of their long-suffering fans would not be surprised. The Rangers haven't won the Stanley Cup in fifty-two years. For decades now, their opponents at critical moments of games have tried to unnerve them with the taunting chant "1940! 1940! 1940!" The chance to win the cup was almost lost last month for reasons that had nothing to do with performance on the ice: the players' union called a strike, and the prospect loomed that the rest of the season would be cancelled. Fortunately, the strike ended after ten days, and the Rangers were back on the ice, although their reappearance required the cancellation of several performances of the circus, which has played Madison Square Garden—or some local structure by that name—virtually every spring since 1874.

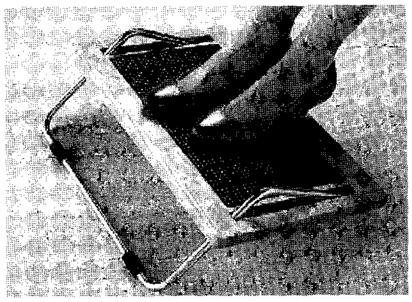


This cocooning thing is great - but it makes it hard to see the TV.

In his victory speech

on the night of the New York primary, April 7th, Governor Bill Clinton, of Arkansas, having in mind (and rather overstating the case) the setback of his March 24th defeat in the Connecticut primary by former Governor Jerry Brown, of California, told the clamoring crowd at the Ritz night club (formerly Studio 54), on West Fifty-fourth Street, "I say this may be the best New York story since the Amazin' Mets in 1969"—the year that the Mets defied all predictions by winning the World Series. "Their slogan back then," Clinton said, "should be our motto tonight: 'You gotta believe!'" Unfortunately for the political tourist, as any baseball fan in the room knew, "You gotta believe!" was the motto of the 1973 Mets, and as he continued you could hear people in the crowd muttering to each other, "1973! 1973! 1973!" If Clinton was going to go in for sports metaphors, his choice of slogan was ominous, since the 1973 Mets won the pennant but lost the Series in the seventh game. On the "Today" show the morning after the primary, Andrea Mitchell quoted Clinton's comparison of his victory to that of the 1969 Mets, and said that some people might associate him instead with the 1992 Mets—three of whom, including pitcher Dwight Gooden, were then being threatened with indictments for rape. (The actions were dropped for lack of evidence.) And Mitchell isn't even one of the New York tabloid reporters whom Clinton (and many visiting national reporters), during the New York primary campaign, complained of as being out of control. It was to members of the local media that Clinton, on one television show here, dedicated his imitation of Elvis Presley singing "Don't Be Cruel." Increasingly, it seems that in New York, at least, political campaigns deliver their messages in musical terms far more insistently than in the days when followers of Al Smith sang "Sidewalks of New York" and that was it. As Clinton arrived at the Ritz, the band played "New York, New York," with the Clinton allies on the stage chiming in on the lines "If you can make it here, you'll make it *any*where." In a campaign appearance, Jerry Brown had said (not sung), "If we can't make it here, we can't make it *any*where"—not a comforting judgment in view of the primary results. The Primary Day banner headline in the *Post* was from the same song: "IT'S UP TO YOU." The headline on the *News* was apt for what politics has become: "SHOWTIME."

FOR political-minded residents of this city—New Yorkers who, say, were momentarily puzzled when, in classified real-estate ads, they first came upon the initials "FDR" and "EIK," which stand for "full dining room" and "eat-in kitchen," rather than Franklin D. Roosevelt and Edward I. Koch—the last few weeks have been part of an intermission between the Presidential primary and the Democratic National Convention, which begins here on July 13th. The fact that only twenty-seven per cent of registered Democrats participated in the primary—in which Clinton drew forty-one per cent of the vote and, in a big surprise, Brown came in third, taking twenty-six per cent, three points fewer than former Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas, the official non-candidate, who had withdrawn from the race on March 19th—raised the question of just how many political-minded New Yorkers there are these days. In the Democratic primary four years ago, when Jesse Jackson was a candidate (Dinkins was co-campaign manager) and carried the city, though not the state, the turnout was forty-five per cent. The falloff in the black vote was particularly striking: in 1988, nearly a quarter of the Democratic-primary voters in the state were black; last month the figure was sixteen per cent. Fifty-two per cent of the blacks last month went for Clinton and only thirty-seven per cent for Brown, even though on April 1st Brown, standing with Jackson on a flatbed truck in front of the Board of Election headquarters, in SoHo, had shouted to a large crowd of supporters that Jackson was his choice for Vice-President, calling the two of them "a winning coalition." Jackson's response was far from an acceptance. He said that, for campaigning purposes, he had made himself and his Rainbow Coalition "available to each of the candidates"—presumably not including George Bush. As it happens, both members of Brown's proposed ticket have been charged, at different times, with resembling the title character in the Woody Allen movie "Zelig"—Brown because his views seem to change according to the political role he has assumed for the moment ("BROWN FIRM ON WHAT HE BELIEVES, BUT



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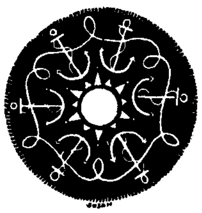
WHAT HE BELIEVES OFTEN SHIFTS" was the headline over a front-page *Times* story during the primary) and Jackson because he seems to turn up wherever one least expects him, particularly in this city, even though it was Washington, D.C., that in 1990 elected him as its so-called shadow senator. (On May 1st, of course, he was in riot-torn Los Angeles, offering himself as the non-elected senator for all American blacks.)

In the previous weeks, Jackson joined Dinkins at a Manhattan rally of hospital workers, urging them to register and vote; delivered the same message to students at Andrew Jackson High School, in Queens (where he pointed out that Brown's winning sixty-three-thousand-vote total in the Connecticut primary was smaller than his own second-place total there in 1988); delivered the eulogy at the funeral of James Bell, a prominent Harlem labor leader; and joined Dinkins and Bill Cosby in calling for nonviolence at meetings held at Brooklyn's Thomas Jefferson High School, where two students had been shot dead by another student, aged fifteen, even though the school was swarming with police and reporters because of an event scheduled for just over an hour later. (The event was a speech by Mayor Dinkins in which he planned, among other things, to remind the students that he himself represented evidence that a young black could grow up to be mayor of this city.) During the primary campaign, Dinkins and Mayor Raymond Flynn, of Boston, who is president of the United States Conference of Mayors, invited to Gracie Mansion dozens of mayors from around the country (twelve came) to meet with Clinton and Brown and ask them whether they would promise to do more for the nation's cities. To no one's surprise, Clinton and Brown so promised. At Dinkins' invitation, the non-mayor (and non-candidate) Jackson was invited to address the mayors beforehand. A large photograph on the front page of the *Times* the next morning showed the shadow senator schmoozing with Clinton and Brown on the front porch of the mansion.

THE most recent poll showed Dinkins losing the 1993 mayoral race by fifteen points to Giuliani. It's no wonder the Mayor allies himself publicly more and more often with his old friend (and "brother," as African-Americans often call each other) Jackson, who skillfully marshalled the black and Hispanic (that is, the Rainbow Coalition) vote for him in 1989. During the last months of that primary campaign, however, Jackson was usually absent from Dinkins' side at campaign rallies as supporters of his major rival, Mayor Ed Koch, pushed Koch's case with the substantial bloc of Jewish voters for whom the name Jesse Jackson automatically summons up "Hymietown," the term that Jackson used for this city in a conversation with a black reporter eight years ago. In the last months of the 1960 Presidential campaign, Joseph Kennedy, a controversial character in many quarters, was largely absent from the candidate's side. The day after Kennedy's election became official, however, Joseph Kennedy suddenly appeared in Hyannis Port for the family portrait, and some observed that it had been a wonderful day for Jack Kennedy: he had been elected President of the United States, and he had found his missing father. On the night of the 1989 mayoral primary here, Jackson suddenly appeared (Dinkins had found his missing brother) and so monopolized the television scene during the celebration that the primary winner didn't get to make his victory speech until well after the end of the eleven-o'clock news. For the general-election campaign and after Dinkins took office, Jackson was rarely included in family photographs.

Though Governor Brown had surely proposed Jesse Jackson as his Vice-President in the hope of currying favor with black voters—"pandering" was Clinton's term—the proposal ticked off some of them instead. Wilbert Tatum, the publisher of the black-owned *Amsterdam News*, said, "Jesse Jackson is capable of being President of the United States and should never be insulted by being mentioned for the Vice-Presidency." (The *Amsterdam News* endorsed Clinton, as did most of the city's major black leaders. The *Times*, the *News*, the *Post*, and the *Jewish Press* did the same. *Newsday* went for Tsongas. The *Village Voice* and *Rolling Stone* endorsed Brown. In the *City Sun*, which vies with Tatum's paper for the title of most influential New York black weekly, the big headline, taking up most of the front page in primary week, was "NONE OF THE ABOVE"—a sentiment so prevalent here, as elsewhere, that it now has its own useful acronym, NOTA.) Unlike Tatum, Jackson himself did not take offense at his being proposed for the Vice-Presidency; indeed, a few weeks later, on April 27th, an interview ran in the *Daily News* in which he insisted on it, demanding that Clinton, whom he now saw as having the nomination locked up, choose him, since in 1988 he had got more votes—seven million—than any Democratic candidate this year. "If I'm rejected this time, I am prepared to react," he said in the interview, which was published under the headline "VICE PREZ, OR ELSE!" He publicly assured Clinton later that the quotation including his vow to react was "text out of context," and in no way intended as a political threat. (If Clinton really felt threatened, Johnny Carson said, the only way to get away from Jackson was for him to go to his country club.) Black voters here who are unhappy with the slate of candidates tend to stay home. However, Jewish voters, who make up more than a quarter of the primary electorate, usually vote, no matter what, and it seems to have been their response to Brown's choice of Jackson for Vice-President that had the greatest effect on the Brown numbers. A poll in late March showed him with a fifth of the Jewish vote. On Primary Day, he got about half that. Both the Catholic and the Southern Baptist Presidential candidates moved purposefully around the city wearing yarmulkes, but a Brown meeting with one Jewish group was disrupted by heckling from an Orthodox Jew, Brooklyn Assemblyman Dov Hikind. As an indication of the importance Clinton laid on the Jewish vote, the Southern Baptist promised (surely he didn't know what he was doing) that if he was elected President there would be a glatt—that is, rigorously—kosher kitchen at the White House. Clinton's Jewish vote in the primary was more than five times Brown's. On the day after the primary, Clinton boasted to Tom Brokaw on NBC that he had won the majority of both black and Jewish voters here, which he believed was a precedent. The headline in the *Jewish Press* was "THE JEWISH VOTE GAVE CLINTON THE ELECTION," and its editorial said that the message "the majority of New Yorkers, not just Jews, reject Jesse Jackson" was one that "Mayor Dinkins and others would do well to heed."

Assemblyman Hikind frequently sends out letters attacking Dinkins for having—so he charges—deliberately delayed sending in the police in full force last August in the Crown Heights riots, which involved black and Hasidic residents. Dinkins, obviously having in mind his own perilous election prospects, held a press conference the day after the primary, in which he mentioned having visited Israel during the Gulf War, and spoke sadly of what he saw as the unfairness of Jews' persistent "deep-seated anger" at Jackson, noting that they had been able to bring themselves to forgive Ronald Reagan for having visited the Nazi cemetery at Bitburg, for example, and that "Jesse embraced me, and I got elected." He had carried, he pointed out, about a quarter of the Jewish vote in the 1989 primary and nearly a third of it against Giuliani in the general election. Of the Jews' continued hard line against Jackson he asked, "When does it subside? When does it subside?" Not all analysts of the primary here, which Clinton has called the "turning point . . . for the Democratic Party and for America" (he did not mention the universe), blamed local ethnic hostilities for Brown's poor showing, which seemed to substantially end his candidacy. Some would probably argue that it was just that no one was quite ready for a Zelig-Zelig ticket. However, in a column in the Washington *Post* written just before the primary vote, David Broder appeared to blame sociological atmosphere for political results. "It is certainly no accident," he stated in an oracular lapse, "that Jerry Brown—who was scrutinized and found wanting in New Hampshire—flourished in the bizarre and bazaar-like mass marketplace of New York." Where Brown had in fact flourished was in the bizarre and bazaar-like mass marketplaces of Maine and Vermont.



Mayor Dinkins did not endorse anyone in the primary here. When he endorses Clinton, as he presumably will, the two men will know that they have in common a sense that the New York press is an alien and hostile crew. Last month, Mike McAlary, of the *Post*, described Dinkins as "perhaps the most tiresome figure in the modern history of the city." If the Mayor expected that the Inner Circle show—the local reporters' annual musical lampoon of City Hall—would be especially hard on him this year, when his administration has been struck by a series of ethical and managerial disasters, the news was good. Inevitably, one song dwelt on his recently departed Housing Authority chairman, Laura Blackburne, who had resigned by request after being charged with a number of questionable expenditures ("Lived it up like a queen/Best damn job/She'd ever seen/Bye, Bye Blackburne"), but most of the sharp attention was turned on others, such as Stein and Giuliani. In the rebuttal to the show which is traditionally put on by whoever is mayor, with the help of his staff and, occasionally, outside writers, and the cast of a current Broadway show, in this case "The Will Rogers Follies," Dinkins, seizing his chance, was harder on the reporters than they had been on him. He described the *Times* City Hall bureau chief, Todd Purdum, as being in the back pocket of the city's first deputy mayor; complained that the Sanitation Department had said that if another *Times* reporter, Calvin Sims, would stop writing "it would reduce city trash by thirty per cent"; and announced that he had arranged with the Federal Aviation Administration to reroute all airplane traffic directly over the house of Joe Calderone, a *Newsday* reporter who has paid undue attention—as Dinkins sees it—to a questionable stock deal involving the Mayor and his son. Told in the rebuttal that someone needed a nude performer, he said he had the perfect candidate—Jimmy Breslin, who, covering the riots in Crown Heights last August, was stripped to his undershorts by a band of young black marauders. It was a fate that might have befallen Dinkins, who was also in Crown Heights that night, if he hadn't been surrounded by a small army of city police—protection that Assemblyman Hikind charged had been for a time withheld from other riot victims.

IN a world in which the grim judgment—not only in politics but in many other areas of life—is so often "none of the above," there is bound to be pining for vanished times when (as they are now remembered) the men and women Americans admired were bigger and better, set the heart beating faster, cast longer shadows, knew what

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they were doing. The Texas businessman Ross Perot knew what he was doing when he promised last month that if he should be elected President "you will see Congress and the White House dancing like Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire used to dance." The most telling expression of the national sense that somehow nearly everything has gone wrong is the question "Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio?" in the Paul Simon song from "The Graduate"—or so Governor Mario Cuomo said when he appeared on "Meet the Press" two days before the primary. Cuomo, who hasn't *gone anywhere except to Albany* in the 1992 Presidential campaign, no doubt feels, as an Italian-American and onetime minor-league baseball player, a special affinity with the Yankee hero. The headline over a *News* editorial two days later was "WHERE HAVE YOU GONE . . . ?" The local Bowery Savings Bank, for which DiMaggio has done the television commercials for eighteen years, has been taken over by a California bank, Home Savings of America, and word had come that Home Savings was dismissing Joltin' Joe as its spokesman. "These folks from La-La Land are obviously ignorant of the degree of affection and esteem in which DiMaggio is held in this town," the *News* said. This sentiment also prevailed at City Hall. Dinkins' press conferences often consist of little more than the Mayor's reading, word for word, long press-release-type speeches prepared for him by his staff. Reporters on the scene are forever putting questions to him about items on the news or sports pages—anywhere—in an effort to liven things up. In response to questions about where he was when some historic local baseball event occurred—say, Bobby Thomson's famous home run against the Brooklyn Dodgers—the Mayor will merely shrug or, ever mindful that he is the city's first black mayor, mention that that very week he saw Jackie Robinson make a play "that just could not be made." When he was asked about the dismissal of DiMaggio, however, the Mayor proved to remember him well. Describing DiMaggio, Dinkins said, "He would take off at the crack of the bat. He seemed to know where the ball was going. He would get a jump. . . . Always very graceful. The cat just had style!"

Beginning early next month, those responsible for running the Democratic National Convention will start getting ready for the great event. It could be a real snorer, although that veteran political-convention-goer H. L. Mencken maintained, "There is something about a national convention that makes it as fascinating as a revival or a hanging. One sits through long sessions wishing heartily that all the delegates and alternates were dead and in hell—and then suddenly there comes a show so gaudy and hilarious, so melodramatic and obscene, so unimaginably exhilarating and preposterous that one lives a gorgeous year in an hour." Long before the Convention preparations begin, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus will have moved out of the Garden. In the three previous national conventions that were held in this city in arenas called Madison Square Garden, it was a tradition for spectators to insist during long roll calls that they could still smell the aroma of departed circuses. Indeed, the first Madison Square Garden, which was on Madison Square, started out as the permanent circus quarters of P. T. Barnum. Eventually, he merely leased it each spring, and it was available the rest of the year for other events—often sporting or, on occasion, political—as is the case with the Garden today. This sharing of territory by circus performers and politicians, who are sometimes seen as bearing a close resemblance to barkers, trained seals, high-wire performers, and freaks, often seems to some on the sidelines to be appropriate, and nothing about the recent primary here—or, for that matter, the Presidential campaign generally—has discouraged such metaphorical linkage. The last event at a Garden that was actually on Madison Square took place in May, 1925. The event was a fight card, featuring two lightweights, Sid Terris and Johnny Dundee. Before the main bout, the klaxon-voiced announcer, Joe Humphreys, got up in the ring to deliver an elegy to the Garden. "We mourn our loss," he shouted, "but take with us fragrant memories!" A voice from the gallery shouted back, "I can still smell them hot dogs and elephants, Joe!" The crowd did not like the decision, which went to Terris, and the booing was loud and long—a noise that no one would bet will not be echoed at the Garden in July.

—ANDY LOGAN

A CRITIC AT LARGE

OUT OF KANSAS

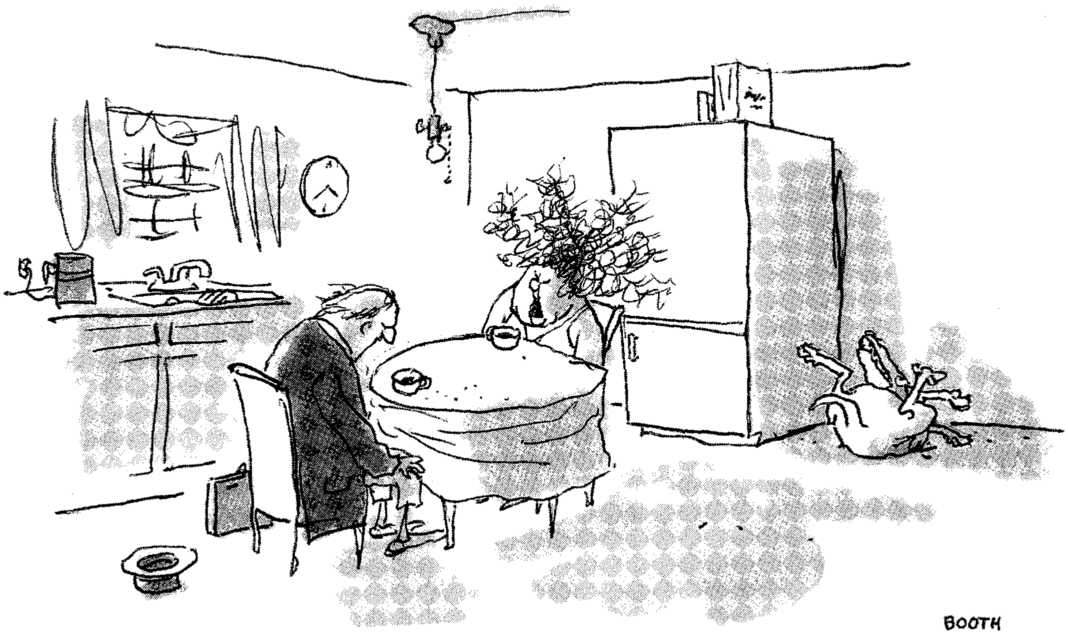
I WROTE my first story in Bombay at the age of ten; its title was "Over the Rainbow." It amounted to a dozen or so pages, dutifully typed up by my father's secretary on flimsy paper, and eventually it was lost somewhere on my family's mazy journeyings between India, England, and Pakistan. Shortly before my father's death, in 1987, he claimed to have found a copy moldering in an old file, but, despite my pleadings, he never produced it, and nobody else ever laid eyes on the thing. I've often wondered about this incident. Maybe he didn't really find the story, in which case he had succumbed to the lure of fantasy, and this was the last of the many fairy tales he told me; or else he did find it, and hugged it to himself as a talisman and a reminder of simpler times, thinking of it as his treasure, not mine—his pot of nostalgic parental gold.

I don't remember much about the story. It was about a ten-year-old Bombay boy who one day happens upon a rainbow's beginning, a place as elusive as any pot-of-gold end zone, and as rich in promises. The rainbow is broad, as wide as the sidewalk, and is constructed like a grand staircase. The boy, naturally, begins to climb. I have forgotten almost everything about his adventures, except for an encounter with a talking pianola, whose personality is an improbable hybrid of Judy Garland, Elvis Presley, and the "playback singers" of Hindi movies, many of which made "The Wizard of Oz" look like kitchen-sink realism. My bad memory—what my mother would call a "forgettery"—is probably just as well. I remember what matters. I remember that "The Wizard of Oz"—the film, not the book, which I didn't read as a child—was my very first literary influence. More than that: I remember that when the possibility of my going to school in England was mentioned it felt as exciting as any voyage beyond the rainbow. It may be hard to believe, but England seemed as wonderful a prospect as Oz.

The Wizard, however, was right there in Bombay. My father, Anis Ahmed Rushdie, was a magical parent of young children, but he was prone to explosions, thunderous rages, bolts of emotional lightning, puffs of dragon smoke, and other menaces of the type also practiced by Oz, the Great and Powerful, the first Wizard De-luxe. And when the curtain fell away and his growing offspring discovered, like Dorothy, the truth about adult humbug, it was easy for me to think, as she did, that my Wizard must be a very bad man indeed. It took me half a lifetime to work out that the Great Oz's apologia pro vita sua fitted my father equally well—that he, too, was a good man but a very bad Wizard.

I have begun with these personal reminiscences because "The Wizard of Oz" is a film whose driving force is the inadequacy of adults, even of good adults; a film that shows us how the weakness of grownups forces children to take control of their own destinies, and so, ironically, grow up themselves. The journey from Kansas to Oz is a rite of passage from a world in which Dorothy's parent substitutes, Auntie Em and Uncle Henry, are powerless to help her save her dog, Toto, from the marauding Miss Gulch into a world where the people are her own size and she is never, ever treated as a child but as a heroine. She gains this status by accident, it's true, having played no part in her house's decision to squash the Wicked Witch of the East; but, by her adventure's end, she has certainly grown to fill those shoes—or, rather, those ruby slippers. "Who would have thought a good little girl like you could destroy my beautiful wickedness," laments the Wicked Witch of the West as she melts—an adult becoming smaller than, and giving way to, a child. As the Wicked Witch of the West "grows down," so Dorothy is seen to have grown up. This, in my view, is a much more satisfactory reason for her newfound power over the ruby slippers than the sentimental reasons offered by the ineffably loopy Good Witch Glinda, and then by Dorothy herself, in a cloying ending that seems to me fundamentally untrue to the film's anarchic spirit.

The weakness of Auntie Em and Uncle Henry in the face of Miss Gulch's desire to annihilate Toto leads Dorothy to think, childishly, of running away from home—of escape. And that's why, when the tornado hits, she isn't with the others in the storm shelter and, as a result, is whirled away to an escape beyond her wildest



"I want you to take some time off! Relax a little."

dreams. Later, however, when she is confronted by the weakness of the Wizard of Oz, she doesn't run away but goes into battle—first against the Wicked Witch and then against the Wizard himself. The Wizard's ineffectuality is one of the film's many symmetries, rhyming with the feebleness of Dorothy's folks; but the different way Dorothy reacts is the point.

The ten-year-old who watched "The Wizard of Oz" at Bombay's Metro Cinema knew very little about foreign parts, and even less about growing up. He did, however, know a great deal more about the cinema of the fantastic than any Western child of the same age. In the West, the film was an oddball, an attempt to make a sort of live-action version of a Disney cartoon feature despite the industry's received wisdom that fantasy movies usually flopped. (Indeed, the movie never really made money until it became a television standard, years after its original theatrical release; it should be said in mitigation, though, that coming out two weeks before the start of the Second World War can't have helped its chances.) In India, however, it fitted into what was then, and remains today, one of the mainstreams of production in the place that Indians, conflating Bombay and Tinseltown, affectionately call Bollywood.

It's easy to satirize the Hindi movies. In James Ivory's film "Bombay Talkie," a novelist (the touching Jennifer Kendal, who died in 1984) visits a studio soundstage and watches an amazing dance number featuring scantily clad nautch girls prancing on the keys of a giant typewriter. The director explains that the keys of the typewriter represent "the Keys of Life," and we are all dancing out "the story of our Fate" upon that great machine. "It's very symbolic," Kendal suggests. The director, simpering, replies, "Thank you." Typewriters of Life, sex goddesses in wet saris (the Indian equivalent of wet T-shirts), gods descending from the heavens to meddle in human affairs, superheroes, demonic villains, and so on, have always been the staple diet of the Indian filmgoer. Blond Glinda arriving at Munchkinland in her magic bubble might cause Dorothy to comment on the high speed and oddity of the local transport operating in Oz, but to an Indian audience Glinda was arriving exactly as a god should arrive: ex machina, out of her own machine. The Wicked Witch of the West's orange smoke puffs were equally appropriate to her super-bad status.

It is clear, however, that despite all the similarities, there were important differences between the Bombay cinema and a film like "The Wizard of Oz." Good fairies and bad witches might superficially resemble the deities and demons of the Hindu pantheon, but in reality one of the most striking aspects of the world view of "The Wizard of Oz" is its joyful and almost total secularism. Religion is mentioned only once in the film: Auntie Em, spluttering with anger at gruesome Miss Gulch, declares that she's waited years to tell her what she thinks of her, "and now, well, being a Christian woman, I can't say it." Apart from this moment in which Christian charity prevents some good old-fashioned plain speaking, the film is breezily godless. There's not a trace of religion in Oz itself—bad witches are feared and good ones liked, but none are sanctified—and, while the Wizard of Oz is thought to be something very close to all-powerful, nobody thinks to worship him. This absence of higher values greatly increases the film's charm, and is an important aspect of its success in creating a world in which nothing is deemed more important than the loves, cares, and needs of human beings (and, of course, tin beings, straw beings, lions, and dogs).

The other major difference is harder to define, because it is finally a matter of quality. Most Hindi movies were then and are now what can only be called trashy. The pleasure to be had from such films (and some of them are extremely enjoyable) is something like the fun of eating junk food. The classic Bombay talkie uses a script of appalling corniness, looks by turns tawdry and vulgar, or else both at once, and relies on the mass appeal of its stars and its musical numbers to provide a little zing. "The Wizard of Oz" has stars and musical numbers, but it is also very definitely a Good Film. It takes the fantasy of Bombay and adds high production values and something more—something not often found in any cinema. Call it imaginative truth. Call it (reach for your revolvers now) art.

But if "The Wizard of Oz" is a work of art it's extremely difficult to say who the artist was. The birth of Oz itself has already passed into legend: the author, L. Frank Baum, named his magic world after the letters "O-Z" on the bottom drawer of his filing cabinet. His original book, "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," published in 1900, contains many of the ingredients of the magic potion: just about all the major characters and events are there, and so are the most important locations—the Yellow Brick Road, the Deadly Poppy Field, the Emerald City. But the filming of "The Wizard of Oz" is a rare instance of a film improving on a good book. One of the changes is the expansion of the Kansas section, which in the novel takes up precisely two pages at the beginning, before the tornado arrives, and just nine lines at the end; and another is a certain simplification of the story line in the Oz section: all subplots were jettisoned, such as the visits to the Fighting Trees, the Dainty China Country, and the Country of the Quadlings, which come into the novel just after the dramatic high point of the Witch's destruction and fritter away the book's narrative drive. And there are two even more important alterations. Frank Baum's Emerald City was green only because everyone in it had to wear emerald-tinted glasses, but in the movie it really is a futuristic chlorophyll green—except, that is, for the Horse of a Different Color You've Heard Tell About. The Horse of a Different Color changes color in each successive shot—a change that was brought about by covering six different horses with a variety of shades of powdered Jell-O. (For this and other anecdotes of the film's production I'm indebted to Aljean Harmetz's definitive book "The Making of The Wizard of Oz.") Last, and most important of all, are the ruby slippers. Frank Baum did not invent the ruby slippers; he had silver shoes instead. Noel Langley, the first of the film's three credited writers, originally followed Baum's idea. But in his fourth script, the script of May 14, 1938, known as the DO NOT MAKE CHANGES script, the clunky metallic and non-mythic silver footwear has been jettisoned, and the immortal jewel shoes are introduced. (In Shot 114, "the ruby shoes appear on Dorothy's feet, glittering and sparkling in the sun.")

Other writers contributed important details to the finished screenplay. Florence Ryerson and Edgar Allan Woolf were probably responsible for "There's no place like home," which, to me, is the least convincing idea in the film. (It's one thing for Dorothy to want to get home, quite another that she can do so only by eulogizing the ideal state that Kansas so obviously is not.) But there's some dispute about this, too; a studio memo implies that it could have been the assistant producer, Arthur Freed, who first came up with the cutesy slogan. And, after much quarrelling between Langley and the Ryerson-Woolf team, it was the film's lyricist, Yip Harburg, who pulled together the final script: he added the crucial scene in which the Wizard, unable to give the companions what they demand, hands out emblems instead, and, to our "satiric and cynical" (the adjectives are Harburg's own) satisfaction, they do the job. The name of the rose turns out to be the rose, after all.

Who, then, is the auteur of "The Wizard of Oz"? No single writer can claim that honor, not even the author of the original book. Mervyn LeRoy and Arthur Freed, the producers, both have their champions. At least four directors worked on the picture, most notably Victor Fleming, who left before shooting ended, however, so that he could make "Gone with the Wind"—which, ironically, was the movie that dominated the Academy Awards in 1940, while "The Wizard of Oz" won just three: Best Song ("Over the Rainbow"), Best Original Score, and a Special Award for Judy Garland. The truth is that this great movie, in which the quarrels, firings, and near-bungles of all concerned produced what seems like pure, effortless, and somehow inevitable felicity, is as near as you can get to that will-o'-the-wisp of modern critical theory: the authorless text.

THE Kansas described by Frank Baum is a depressing place. Everything in it is gray as far as the eye can see: the prairie is gray, and so is the house in which Dorothy lives. As for Auntie Em, "The sun and wind . . . had taken the sparkle from her eyes and left them a sober gray; they had taken the red from her cheeks and lips, and they were gray also. She was thin and gaunt, and never smiled now." And "Uncle Henry never laughed. . . . He was gray also, from his long beard to his rough boots." The sky? It was "even grayer than usual." Toto, fortunately, was spared grayness. He "saved [Dorothy] from growing as gray as her other surroundings." He was not exactly colorful, though his eyes did twinkle and his hair was silky. Toto was black.

Out of this grayness—the gathering, cumulative grayness of that bleak world—calamity comes. The tornado is the grayness gathered together and whirled about and unleashed, so to speak, against itself. And to all this the film is astonishingly faithful, shooting the Kansas scenes in what we call black-and-white but what is in reality a multiplicity of shades of gray, and darkening its images until the whirlwind sucks them up and rips them to pieces.

There is, however, another way of understanding the tornado. Dorothy has a surname: Gale. And in many ways Dorothy is the gale blowing through this little corner of nowhere, demanding justice for her little dog while the adults give in meekly to the powerful Miss Gulch; Dorothy, who is prepared to break the gray inevitability of her life by running away, and who, because she is so tenderhearted, runs back when Professor Marvel tells her Auntie Em is distraught that she has fled. Dorothy is the life force of Kansas, just as Miss Gulch is the force of death; and perhaps it is Dorothy's feelings, or the cyclone of feelings unleashed between Dorothy and Miss Gulch, that are made actual in the great dark snake of cloud that wriggles across the prairie, eating the world.

The Kansas of the film is a little less unremittingly bleak than the Kansas of the book, if only because of the introduction of the three farmhands and of Professor Marvel—four characters who will find their "rhymes," or counterparts, in the Three Companions of Oz and the Wizard himself. Then again, the film's Kansas is also more terrifying than the book's, be-

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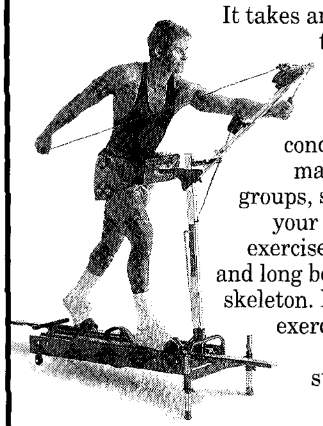

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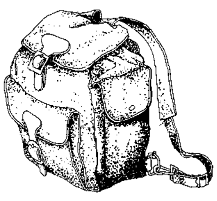

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cause it adds a presence of real evil: the angular Miss Gulch, with a profile that could carve a joint, riding stiffly on her bicycle with a hat on her head like a plum pudding, or a bomb, and claiming the protection of the Law for her crusade against Toto. Thanks to Miss Gulch, the movie's Kansas is informed not only by the sadness of dirt-poverty but also by the badness of would-be dog murderers.

And *this* is the home that "there's no place like"? *This* is the lost Eden that we are asked to prefer (as Dorothy does) to Oz?

I remember, or I imagine I remember, that when I first saw the film Dorothy's place struck me as a dump. Of course, if *I'd* been whisked off to Oz, I reasoned, I'd naturally want to get home again, because I had plenty to come home for. But Dorothy? Maybe we should invite her over to stay; anywhere looks better than *that*.

I thought one other thought, which gave me a sneaking regard for the Wicked Witch: I couldn't stand Toto! I still can't. As Gollum said of the hobbit Bilbo Baggins in another great fantasy, "*Baggins:* we hates it to pieces." Toto: that little yapping hairpiece of a creature, that meddlesome rug! Frank Baum, excellent fellow, gave a distinctly minor role to the dog: it kept Dorothy happy, and when she wasn't it had a tendency to "whine dismally"—not an endearing trait. The dog's only really important contribution to Baum's story came when it accidentally knocked over the screen behind which the Wizard stood concealed. The film Toto rather more deliberately pulls aside a curtain to reveal the Great Humbug, and, in spite of everything, I found this change an irritating piece of mischief-making. I was not surprised to learn that the canine actor playing Toto was possessed of a star's temperament, and even, at one point in the shooting, brought things to a standstill by staging a nervous breakdown. That Toto should be the film's one true object of love has always rankled.

THE film begins. We are in the monochrome, "real" world of Kansas. A girl and her dog run down a country lane. "She isn't coming yet, Toto. Did she hurt you? She tried to, didn't she?" A real girl, a real dog, and the beginning, with the very first line of dialogue, of real drama. Kansas, however, is not real—no more real than Oz. Kansas is a pastel. Dorothy and Toto have been running down a short stretch of "road" in the M-G-M studios, and this shot has been matted into a picture of emptiness. "Real" emptiness would probably not be empty enough. This Kansas is as close as makes no difference to the universal gray of Frank Baum's story, the void broken only by a couple of fences and the vertical lines of telegraph poles. If Oz is *nowhere*, then the studio setting of the Kansas scenes suggests that *so is Kansas*. This is necessary. A realistic depiction of the extreme poverty of Dorothy Gale's circumstances would have created a burden, a heaviness, that would have rendered impossible the imaginative leap into Storyland, the soaring flight into Oz. The Grimms' fairy tales, it's true, were often brutally realistic. In "The Fisherman and His Wife," the eponymous couple live, until they meet the magic flounder, in what is tersely described as "a pisspot." But in many children's versions of Grimm the pisspot is bowdlerized into a "hovel" or some even gentler word. Hollywood's vision has always been of this soft-focus variety. Dorothy looks extremely well fed, and she is not really but unreally poor.

She arrives at the farmyard, and here (freezing the frame) we see the beginning of what will be a recurring visual motif. In the scene we have frozen, Dorothy and Toto are in the background, heading for a gate. To the left of the screen is a tree trunk, a vertical line echoing the telegraph poles of the previous scene. Hanging from an approximately horizontal branch are a triangle (for calling farmhands to dinner) and a circle (actually a rubber tire). In midshot are further geometric elements: the parallel lines of the wooden fence, the bisecting diagonal wooden bar at the gate. Later, when we see the house, the theme of simple geometry is present again: everything is right angles and triangles. The world of Kansas, that great void, is defined as "home" by the use of simple, uncomplicated shapes—none of your citified complexity here. Throughout "The Wizard of Oz," home and safety are represented by such geometrical simplicity, whereas danger and evil are invariably twisty, irregular, and misshapen. The tornado is just such an untrustworthy, sinuous, shifting shape. Random, unfixed, it wrecks the plain shapes of that no-frills life.

Curiously, the Kansas sequence invokes not only geometry but arithmetic, too, for when Dorothy, like the chaotic force she is, bursts in upon Auntie Em and Uncle Henry with her fears about Toto, what are they doing? Why do they shoo her away? "We're trying to count," they admonish her as they take a census of chicks—their metaphorical chickens, their small hopes of income—which the tornado will shortly blow away. So, with simple shapes and numbers, Dorothy's family erects its defenses against the immense and maddening emptiness; and these defenses are useless, of course.

Leaping ahead to Oz, it becomes obvious that this opposition between the geometric and the twisty is no accident. Look at the beginning of the Yellow Brick Road: it is a perfect spiral. Look at Glinda's carriage, that perfect, luminous sphere. Look at the regimented routines of the Munchkins as they greet Dorothy and thank her for the death of the Wicked Witch of the East. Move on to the Emerald City: see it in the distance, its straight lines soaring into the sky! And now, by contrast, observe the Wicked Witch of the West: her crouching figure, her misshapen hat. How does she arrive and depart? In a puff of shapeless smoke. "Only bad witches are ugly," Glinda tells Dorothy, a remark of high Political Incorrectness which emphasizes the film's animosity toward whatever is tangled, claw-crooked, and weird. Woods are invariably frightening—the gnarled branches of trees are capable of coming to menacing life—and the one moment when the Yellow Brick Road itself bewilders Dorothy is the moment when it ceases to be geometric (first spiral, then rectilinear), and splits and forks every which way.

BACK in Kansas, Auntie Em is delivering the scolding that is the prelude to one of the cinema's immortal moments.

"You always get yourself into a fret over nothing. . . . Find yourself a place where you won't get into any trouble!"

"Some place where there isn't any trouble. Do you suppose there is such a place, Toto? There must be."

Anybody who has swallowed the scriptwriters' notion that this is a film about the superiority of "home" over "away," that the "moral" of "The Wizard of Oz" is as sentimental as an embroidered sampler—"East, West, Home's Best"—would do well to listen to the yearning in Judy Garland's voice as her face tilts up toward the skies. What she expresses here, what she embodies with the purity of an archetype, is the human dream of *leaving*—a dream at least as powerful as its countervailing dream of roots. At the heart of "The Wizard of Oz" is a great tension between these two dreams; but, as the music swells and that big, clean voice flies into the anguished longings of the song, can anyone doubt which message is the stronger? In its most potent emotional moment, this is inarguably a film about the joys of going away, of leaving the grayness and entering the color, of making a new life in the "place where you won't get into any trouble." "Over the Rainbow" is, or ought to be, the anthem of all the world's migrants, all those who go in search of the place where "the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true." It is a celebration of Escape, a grand paean to the Uprooted Self, a hymn—*the* hymn—to Elsewhere.

One of the leading actors in the cast complained that "there was no acting" in the movie, and in the usual sense this was correct. But Garland singing "Over the Rainbow" did something extraordinary: in that moment she gave the film its heart, and the force of her rendition is strong and sweet and deep enough to carry us through all the tomfoolery that follows, even to bestow upon it a touching quality, a vulnerable charm, that is matched only by Bert Lahr's equally extraordinary creation in the role of the Cowardly Lion.

What is left to say about Garland's Dorothy? The conventional wisdom is that the performance gains in ironic force because its innocence contrasts so starkly with what we know of the actress's difficult later life. I'm not sure this is right. It seems to me that Garland's performance succeeds on its own terms, and on the film's. She is required to pull off what sounds like an impossible trick. On the one hand,

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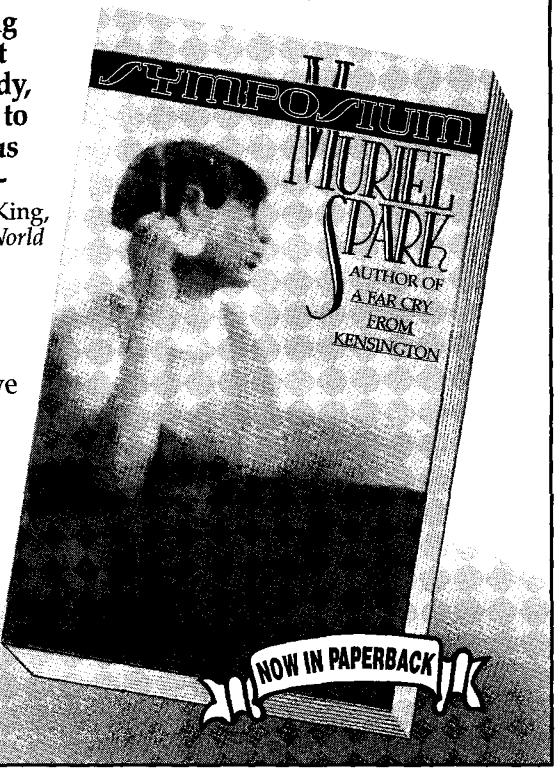

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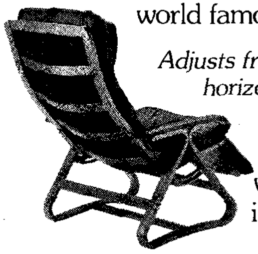

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she is to be the film's tabula rasa, the blank slate upon which the action of the story gradually writes itself—or, because it is a movie, the screen upon which the action plays. Armed only with a wide-eyed look, she must be the object of the film as much as its subject, must allow herself to be the empty vessel that the movie slowly fills. And yet, at the same time, she must (with a little help from the Cowardly Lion) carry the entire emotional weight, the whole cyclonic force, of the film. That she achieves both is due not only to the mature depth of her singing voice but also to the odd stockiness, the gaucheness, that endears her to us precisely because it is half unbeautiful, *jolie-laide,* instead of the posturing adorableness a Shirley Temple would have brought to the role—and Temple was seriously considered for the part. The scrubbed, ever so slightly lumpy unsexiness of Garland's playing is what makes the movie work. One can imagine the disastrous flirtatiousness young Shirley would have employed, and be grateful that Twentieth Century Fox refused to loan her to M-G-M.

The tornado, swooping down on Dorothy's home, creates the second genuinely mythic image of "The Wizard of Oz": the archetypal myth, one might say, of moving house. In this, the transitional sequence of the movie, when the unreal reality of Kansas gives way to the realistic surreality of the world of wizardry, there is, as befits a threshold moment, much business involving windows and doors. First, the farmhands open up the doors of the storm shelter, and Uncle Henry, heroic as ever, persuades Auntie Em that they can't afford to wait for Dorothy. Second, Dorothy, returning with Toto from her attempt at running away, opens the screen door of the main house, which is instantly ripped from its hinges and blown away. Third, we see the others closing the doors of the storm shelter. Fourth, Dorothy, inside the house, opens a door in her frantic search for Auntie Em. Fifth, Dorothy goes to the storm shelter, but its doors are already battened down. Sixth, Dorothy retreats back inside the main house, her cry for Auntie Em weak and fearful; whereupon a window, echoing the screen door, blows off its hinges and knocks her cold. She falls upon the bed, and from now on magic reigns. We have passed through the film's most important gateway.

But this device—the knocking out of Dorothy—is the most radical and the worst change wrought in Frank Baum's original conception. For in the book there is no question that Oz is real—that it is a place of the same order, though not of the same type, as Kansas. The film, like the TV soap opera "Dallas," introduces an element of bad faith when it permits the possibility that everything that follows is a dream. This type of bad faith cost "Dallas" its audience and eventually killed it off. That "The Wizard of Oz" avoided the soap opera's fate is a testament to the general integrity of the film, which enabled it to transcend this hoary, creaking cliché.

While the house flies through the air, looking like the tiny toy it is, Dorothy "awakes." What she sees through the window is a sort of movie—the window acting as a cinema screen, a frame within the frame—which prepares her for the new sort of movie she is about to step into. The special-effects shots, sophisticated for their time, include a lady sitting knitting in her rocking chair as the tornado whirls her by, a cow placidly standing in the eye of the storm, two men rowing a boat through the twisting air, and, most important, the figure of Miss Gulch on her bicycle, which is transformed, as we watch it, into the figure of the Wicked Witch of the West on her broomstick, her cape flying behind her, and her huge, cackling laugh rising above the storm.

The house lands; Dorothy emerges from her bedroom with Toto in her arms. We have reached the moment of color. But the first color shot, in which Dorothy walks away from the camera toward the front door of the house, is deliberately dull, an attempt to match the preceding monochrome. Then, or[illegible] the door is open, color floods the screen. In these color-glutted days, it's hard for us to imagine ourselves back in a time when color was still relatively rare in the movies. Thinking back once again to my Bombay childhood, in the nineteen-fifties—a time when Hindi movies were *all* in black-and-white—I can recall the excitement of the advent of color in them. In an epic about the Grand Mughal, the Em-

"And on tap I've got Enfamil, Isomil, and Gerber Lite."

• •

peror Akbar, entitled "Mughal-e-Azam," there was only one reel of color photography, featuring a dance at court by the fabled Anarkali. Yet this reel alone guaranteed the film's success, drawing crowds by the million.

The makers of "The Wizard of Oz" clearly decided that they were going to make their color as colorful as possible, much as Michelangelo Antonioni did, years later, in his first color feature, "Red Desert." In the Antonioni film, color is used to create heightened and often surrealistic effects. "The Wizard of Oz" likewise goes for bold, Expressionist splashes—the yellow of the Brick Road, the red of the Poppy Field, the green of the Emerald City and of the Witch's skin. So striking were the film's color effects that soon after seeing the film as a child I began to dream of green-skinned witches; and years afterward I gave these dreams to the narrator of my novel "Midnight's Children," having completely forgotten their source. "No colours except green and black the walls are green the sky is black . . . the stars are green the Widow is green but her hair is black as black": so began the stream-of-consciousness dream sequence, in which the nightmare of Indira Gandhi is fused with the equally nightmarish figure of Margaret Hamilton—a coming together of the Wicked Witches of the East and of the West.

Dorothy, stepping into color, framed by exotic foliage, with a cluster of dwarfy cottages behind her, and looking like a blue-smocked Snow White, no princess but a good, demotic American gal, is clearly struck by the absence of her familiar homey gray. "Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore," she says, and that camp classic of a line has detached itself from the movie to become a great American catchphrase, endlessly recycled, and even turning up as one of the epigraphs to Thomas Pynchon's mammoth paranoid fantasy of the Second World War, "Gravity's Rainbow," whose characters' destiny lies not "behind the moon, beyond the rain" but "beyond the zero" of consciousness, in a land at least as bizarre as Oz.

But Dorothy has done more than step out of the gray into Technicolor. Her homelessness, her *unhousing*, is underlined by the fact that, after all the door play of the transitional sequence, and having now stepped out-of-doors, she will not be permitted to enter any interior at all until she reaches the Emerald City. From tornado to Wizard, Dorothy never has a roof over her head. Out there amid the giant hollyhocks, which bear blooms like old gramophone trumpets, there in the vulnerability of open space (albeit open space that isn't at all like the Kansas prairie), Dorothy is about to outdo Snow White by a factor of nearly twenty. You can almost hear the M-G-M studio chiefs plotting to put the Disney hit in the shade—not simply by providing in live action almost as many miraculous effects as the Disney cartoonists created but also by surpassing Disney in the matter of the little people. If Snow White had seven dwarfs, then Dorothy Gale, from the star called Kansas, would have a hundred and twenty-four.

The Munchkins were made up and costumed exactly like 3-D cartoon figures. The Mayor of Munchkin City is quite implausibly rotund; the Coroner sings out the Witch of the East's Certificate of Death ("And she's not only merely dead, she's really most sincerely dead") while wearing a hat with an absurdly scroll-like brim; the quiffs of the Lollipop Kids, who appear to have arrived in Oz by way of Bash Street and Dead End, stand up more stiffly than Tintin's. But what might have been a grotesque and unappetizing sequence in fact becomes the moment in which "The Wizard of Oz" captures its audience once and for all, by allying the natural charm of the story to brilliant M-G-M choreography (which alternates large-scale routines with neat little set pieces like the dance of the Lullaby League, or the Sleepy Heads awaking mobcapped and be-nightied out of cracked blue eggshells set in a giant nest), and, above all, through Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg's exceptionally witty "Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead." Arlen was a little contemptuous of this song and the equally unforgettable "We're Off to See the Wizard," calling them his "lemon-drop songs," and perhaps this is because the real inventiveness in both tunes lies in Harburg's lyrics. In Dorothy's intro to "Ding Dong!" Harburg embarked on a pyrotechnic display of a-a-a rhymes ("The wind began to switch/the house to pitch"; until, at length, we meet the "witch . . . thumbin' for a hitch"; and "what happened then was rich")—a series in which, as with a vaudeville barker's alliterations, we cheer each new rhyme as a sort of gymnastic triumph. This type of verbal play continues to characterize both songs. In "Ding Dong!" Harburg begins to invent punning, concertinaed words:

> Ding, dong, the witch is dead!
> *Whicholwitch?*
> —The wicked witch!

This technique found much fuller expression in "We're Off to See the

Wizard,” becoming the real “hook” of the song:

> We’re off to see the Wizard,
> The wonderful *Wizzerdovoz.*
> We hear he is
> A *Wizzovawizz,*
> If ever a *Wizztherwozz.*
> If *everoever* a *Wizztherwozz*
> The *Wizzerdovoz* is one because . . .

And so on.

Amid all this Munchkining we are given two very different portraits of adults. The Good Witch Glinda is pretty in pink (well, prettyish, even if Dorothy is moved to call her “beautiful”). She has a high, cooing voice, and a smile that seems to have jammed. She has one excellent gag line, after Dorothy disclaims witchy status: pointing at Toto, Glinda inquires, “Well, is *that* the witch?” This joke apart, she spends the scene looking generally benevolent and loving and rather too heavily powdered. Interestingly, though she is the Good Witch, the goodness of Oz does not inhere in her. The people of Oz are naturally good, unless they are under the power of the Wicked Witch (as is shown by the improved behavior of her soldiers after she melts). In the moral universe of the film, then, evil is external, dwelling solely in the dual devil figure of Miss Gulch/Wicked Witch.

(A parenthetical worry about the presentation of Munchkinland: Is it not a mite too pretty, too kempt, too sweetly sweet for a place that was, until the moment of Dorothy’s arrival, under the absolute power of the evil and dictatorial Witch of the East? How is it that this squashed Witch had no castle? How could her despotism have left so little mark upon the land? Why are the Munchkins so relatively unafraid, hiding only briefly before they emerge, and giggling while they hide? A heretical thought occurs: Maybe the Witch of the East wasn’t as bad as all that—she certainly kept the streets clean, the houses painted and in good repair, and, no doubt, such trains as there might be running on time. Moreover—and, again, unlike her sister—she seems to have ruled without the aid of soldiers, policemen, or other regiments of repression. Why, then, was she so hated? I only ask.)

Glinda and the Witch of the West are the only two symbols of power in a film that is largely about the powerless, and it’s instructive to “unpack” them. They are both women, and a striking aspect of “The Wizard of Oz” is its lack of a male hero—because, for all their brains, heart, and courage, it is impossible to see the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion as classic Hollywood leading men. The power center of the film is a triangle at whose points are Glinda, Dorothy, and the Witch; the fourth point, at which the Wizard is thought for most of the film to stand, turns out to be an illusion. The power of men, it is suggested, is illusory; the power of women is real.

Of the two Witches, good and bad, can there be anyone who’d choose to spend five minutes with Glinda? Of course, Glinda is “good” and the Wicked Witch “bad”; but Glinda is a silly pain in the neck, and the Wicked Witch is lean and mean. Check out their clothes: frilly pink versus slimline black. No contest. Consider their attitudes toward their fellow-women: Glinda simpers upon being called beautiful, and denigrates her unbeautiful sisters, whereas the Wicked Witch is in a rage because of the death of *her* sister, demonstrating, one might say, a commendable sense of solidarity. We may hiss at her, and she may terrify us as children, but at least she doesn’t embarrass us the way Glinda does. It’s true that Glinda exudes a sort of raddled motherly safeness while the Witch of the West looks—in this scene, anyhow—curiously frail and impotent, obliged to mouth empty threats (“I’ll bide my time. . . . But just try to stay out of my way”). Yet just as feminism has sought to rehabilitate pejorative old words such as “hag,” “crone,” and “witch,” so the Wicked Witch of the West can be said to represent the more positive of the two images of powerful womanhood on offer here. Glinda and the Wicked Witch clash most fiercely over the ruby slippers, which Glinda magics off the feet of the dead Witch of the East and onto Dorothy’s feet, and which the Wicked Witch seemingly has no power to remove. But Glinda’s instructions to Dorothy are oddly enigmatic, even contradictory. She first tells Dorothy, “Their magic must be very powerful or she wouldn’t want them so badly,” and later she says, “Never let those ruby slippers off your feet for a moment or you will be at the mercy of the Wicked Witch of the West.” Now, Statement No. 1 suggests that Glinda is unclear about the nature of the ruby slippers, whereas Statement No. 2 suggests that she knows all about their protective power. Neither statement hints at the ruby slippers’ later role in helping to get Dorothy back to Kansas. It seems probable that this confusion is a hangover from the long, dissension-riddled scripting process, in which the function of the slippers was the subject of considerable dispute. But one can also see Glinda’s obliquities as proof that a good fairy or a good witch, when she sets out to be of assistance, never gives you everything. Glinda, after all, is not so unlike her description of the Wizard of Oz: “Oh, very good, but very mysterious.”

“JUST follow the Yellow Brick Road,” says Glinda, and bubbles off into the blue hills in the distance; and Dorothy—geometrically influenced, as who would not be after a childhood among triangles, circles, and squares—begins her journey at the very point from which the Road spirals outward. And as she does so, and while both she and the Munchkins are echoing Glinda’s instructions in tones both raucously high and gutturally low, something begins to happen to her feet: their motion acquires a syncopation, which by beautifully slow stages grows more and more noticeable until at last, as the ensemble bursts for the first time into the film’s theme song, we see, fully developed, the clever, shuffling little skip that will be the leitmotif of the entire journey:

> You’re off to see the Wizard,
> (*s-skip*)
> The wonderful Wizzerdovoz.
> (*s-skip*)
> You’ll find he is a Wizzovawizz
> If ever a Wizztherwozz. . . .

In this way, s-skipping along, Dorothy Gale, who is already a National Heroine of Munchkinland, who is already (as the Munchkins have assured her) History, who “will be a Bust in the Hall of Fame,” steps out along the road of destiny, and heads, as Americans must, into the West: toward the sunset, the Emerald City, and the Witch.

I have always found off-camera anecdotes about a film’s production simultaneously delicious and disappointing, especially when the film concerned has lodged as deep down inside as "The Wizard of Oz" has. It was a little sad to learn about the Wizard's drinking problem, and to discover that Frank Morgan was only the third choice for the part, behind W. C. Fields and Ed Wynn. (What contemptuous wildness Fields might have brought to the role!) The first choice for his female more-than-opposite number, the Witch, was Gale Sondergaard, not only a great beauty but, prospectively, another Gale to set alongside Dorothy and the tornado. Then I found myself staring at an old color photograph of the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and Dorothy, posing in a forest set, surrounded by autumn leaves, and realized that what I was looking at was not the stars at all but their stunt doubles, their stand-ins. It was an unremarkable studio still, but it took my breath away; for it, too, was both melancholy and mesmeric. In my mind, it came to be the very epitome of the doubleness of my responses.

There they stand, Nathanael West's locusts, the ultimate wannabes. Garland's shadow, Bobbie Koshay, with her hands clasped behind her back and a white bow in her hair, is doing her brave best to smile, but she knows she's a counterfeit, all right: there are no ruby slippers on her feet. The mock-Scarecrow looks glum, too, even though he has avoided the full-scale burlap-sack makeup that was Ray Bolger's daily fate. If it were not for the clump of straw poking out of his right sleeve, you'd think he was some kind of hobo. Between them, in full metallic drag, stands the Tin Man's tinnier echo, looking as miserable as hell. Stand-ins know their fate: they know we don't want to admit their existence, even though our rational minds tell us that when we watch the figure in this or that difficult shot—watch the Wicked Witch fly, or the Cowardly Lion dive through a glass window—we aren't watching the stars. The part of us that has suspended disbelief insists on seeing the stars, and not their doubles. Thus, the stand-ins are rendered invisible even when they are in full view. They remain off camera even when they are onscreen.

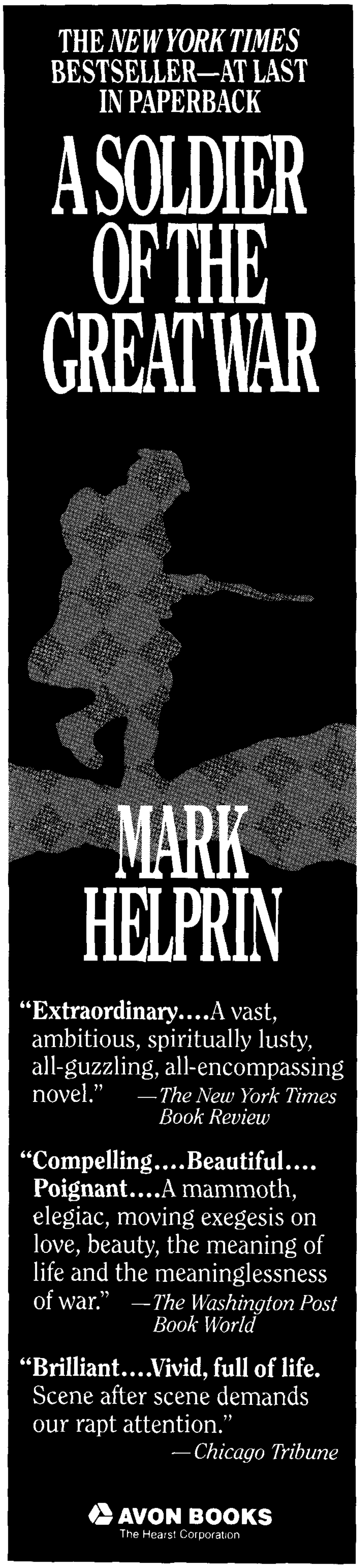
However, this is not the reason for the curious fascination of the photograph; that arises from the fact that, in the case of a beloved film, we are all the stars' doubles. Our imaginations put us in the Lion's skin, fit the sparkling slippers on our feet, send us cackling through the air on a broomstick. To look at this photograph is to look into a mirror; in it we see ourselves. The world of "The Wizard of Oz" has possessed us. We have become the stand-ins. A pair of ruby slippers found in a bin in a basement at M-G-M was sold at auction in May, 1970, for the amazing sum of fifteen thousand dollars. The purchaser was, and has remained, anonymous. Who was it who wished so profoundly to possess—perhaps even to wear—Dorothy's magic shoes?

ON being asked to pick a single defining image of "The Wizard of Oz," most of us would, I suspect, come up with the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, and Dorothy s-skipping down the Yellow Brick Road. (In point of fact, the skip continues to grow throughout the journey, and becomes a full-fledged h-hop.) How strange that the most famous passage of this very filmic film—a film packed with technical ingenuity and effects—should be the least cinematic, the most "stagy," part of the whole! Or perhaps not so strange, for this is primarily a passage of surreal comedy, and we recall that the equally inspired clowning of the Marx Brothers was no less stagily filmed; the zany mayhem of the playing made any but the simplest camera techniques impossible.

The Scarecrow and the Tin Man are pure products of the burlesque theatre, specializing in pantomime exaggerations of voice and body movements, pratfalls (the Scarecrow descending from his post), improbable leanings beyond the center of gravity (the Tin Man during his little dance), and, of course, the smart-ass backchat of the crosstalk act:

> TIN MAN (*rusted solid*): (Squawks)
> DOROTHY: He said "Oil can"!
> SCARECROW: Oil can what?

At the pinnacle of all this clowning is that fully realized comic masterpiece of a creation, Bert Lahr's Cowardly Lion, all elongated vowel sounds ("Put 'em uuuuuuuup"), ridiculous rhymes ("rhinoceros" and "imposserous"), transparent bravado, and huge, operatic, tail-tugging, blubbering terror. All three—Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion—are, in T. S. Eliot's phrase, hollow men. The Scarecrow, of course,



THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER—AT LAST IN PAPERBACK

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actually does have a "headpiece filled with straw, alas," but the Tin Man, the ancestor of C-3PO in "Star Wars," is completely empty—he bangs on his chest to prove that his innards are missing, because "the Tinsmith," his shadowy maker, forgot to provide a heart—and the Lion lacks the most leonine of qualities, lamenting:

> What makes the Hottentot so hot?
> What puts the ape in apricot?
> What have they got that I ain't got?
> *Courage!*

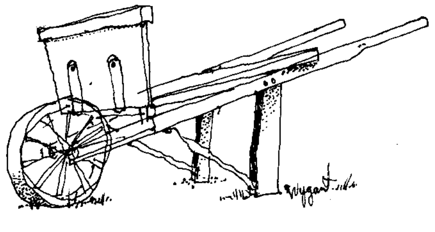
Perhaps it is because they are all hollow that our imaginations can enter them and fill them up so easily. That is to say, it is their anti-heroism, their apparent lack of Great Qualities, that makes them our size, or even smaller, so that we can stand among them as equals, like Dorothy among the Munchkins. Gradually, however, we discover that, along with their "straight man," Dorothy (she occupies in this sequence the role of the unfunny Marx Brother, the one who could sing and look hunky and do little else), they embody one of the film's "messages"—that we already possess what we seek most fervently. The Scarecrow regularly comes up with bright ideas, which he offers with self-deprecating disclaimers. The Tin Man can weep with grief long before the Wizard gives him a heart. And Dorothy's capture by the Witch brings out the Lion's courage, even though he pleads with his friends to "talk me out of it." For this message to have its full impact, however, it is necessary that we learn the futility of looking for solutions *outside*. We must learn about one more hollow man: the Wizard of Oz himself. Just as the Tinsmith was a flawed maker of tin men—just as, in this secular movie, the Tin Man's god is dead—so too must our belief in wizards perish, so that we may believe in ourselves. We must survive the Deadly Poppy Field, helped by a mysterious snowfall (why *does* snow overcome the poppies' poison?), and so arrive, accompanied by heavenly choirs, at the city gates.

HERE the film changes convention once again, becoming a portrait of hicks from the sticks arriving in the metropolis—one of the classic themes of American films, with echoes in "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town," and even in Clark Kent's arrival at the *Daily Planet* in "Superman." Dorothy is a country hick, "Dorothy the small and meek"; her companions are backwoods buffoons. Yet—and this, too, is a familiar Hollywood trope—it is the out-of-towners, the country mice, who will save the day.

There was never a metropolis quite like Emerald City, however. It looks from the outside like a fairy tale of New York, a thicket of skyscraping green towers. On the inside, though, it's the very essence of quaintness. Even more startling is the discovery that the citizens—many of them played by Frank Morgan, who adds the parts of the gatekeeper, the driver of the horse-drawn buggy, and the palace guard to those of Professor Marvel and the Wizard—speak with what Hollywood actors like to call an English accent. "Tyke yer anyplace in the city, we does," says the driver, adding, "I'll tyke yer to a little place where you can tidy up a bit, what?" Other members of the citizenry are dressed like Grand Hotel bellhops and glitzy nuns, and they say—or, rather, sing—things like "Jolly good fun!" Dorothy catches on quickly. At the Wash & Brush Up Co., a tribute to urban technological genius with none of the dark doubts of a "Modern Times" or a "City Lights," our heroine gets a little Englished herself:

> Dorothy (*sings*): Can you even dye my eyes to match my gown?
> Attendant: Uh-huh!
> Dorothy: Jolly old town!

Most of the citizenry are cheerfully friendly, and those who appear not to be—the gatekeeper, the palace guard—are soon won over. (In this respect, once again, they are untypical city folk.) Our four friends finally gain entry to the Wizard's palace because Dorothy's tears of frustration undam a quite alarming reservoir of liquid in the guard. His face is quickly sodden with tears, and, watching this extreme performance, you are struck by the sheer number of occasions on which people cry in this film. Besides Dorothy and the guard, there is the Cowardly Lion, who bawls when Dorothy bops him on the nose; the Tin Man, who almost rusts up again from weeping; and Dorothy again, while she is in the clutches of the Witch. It occurs to you that if the hydrophobic Witch could only have been closer at hand on one of these occasions the movie might have been much shorter.



Into the palace we go, down an arched corridor that looks like an elongated version of the Looney Tunes logo, and at last we confront a Wizard whose tricks—giant heads and flashes of fire—conceal his basic kinship with Dorothy. He, too, is an immigrant; indeed, as he will later reveal, he is a Kansas man himself. (In the novel, he came from Omaha.) These two immigrants have adopted opposite strategies of survival in a new and strange land. Dorothy has been unfailingly polite, careful, courteously "small and meek," whereas the Wizard has been fire and smoke, bravado and bombast, and has hustled his way to the top—floated there, so to speak, on a cloud of his own hot air. But Dorothy learns that meekness isn't enough, and the Wizard finds (as his balloon gets the better of him for a second time) that his command of hot air isn't all it should be. (It is hard for a migrant like me not to see in these shifting destinies a parable of the migrant condition.)

The Wizard's stipulation that he will grant no wishes until the four friends have brought him the Witch's broomstick ushers in the penultimate, and least challenging (though most action-packed and "exciting"), movement of the film, which is in this phase at once a buddy movie, a straightforward adventure yarn, and, after Dorothy's capture, a more or less conventional princess-rescue story. The film, having arrived at the great dramatic climax of the confrontation with the Wizard of Oz, sags for a while, and doesn't really regain momentum until the equally climactic final struggle with the Wicked Witch, which ends with her melting, her "growing down" into nothingness.

◆

FAST forward. The Witch is gone. The Wizard has been unmasked, and in the moment of his unveiling has succeeded in performing a spot of true magic, giving Dorothy's companions the gifts they did not believe until that moment that they possessed. The Wizard is gone, too, and without Dorothy, their plans having been fouled up by (who else but) Toto. And here is Glinda, telling Dorothy she has to learn the meaning of the ruby slippers for herself.

TIN MAN: What have you learned, Dorothy?

DOROTHY: . . . If I ever go looking for my heart's desire again, I won't look any further than my own back yard; because if it isn't there, I never really lost it to begin with. Is that right?

GLINDA: That's all it is. . . . Now those magic slippers will take you home in two seconds. . . . Close your eyes and tap your heels together three times . . . and think to yourself . . . there's no place like . . .

Hold it.

How does it come about that at the close of this radical and enabling film—which teaches us in the least didactic way possible to build on what we have, to make the best of ourselves—we are given this conservative little homily? Are we to think that Dorothy has learned no more on her journey than that she didn't need to make such a journey in the first place? Must we believe that she now accepts the limitations of her home life, and agrees that the things she doesn't have there are no loss to her? "Is that right?" Well, excuse *me*, Glinda, but it is not.

Home again, in black-and-white, with Auntie Em and Uncle Henry and the rude mechanicals clustered around her bed, Dorothy begins her second revolt, fighting not only against the patronizing dismissals by her own folk but also against the scriptwriters and the sentimental moralizing of the entire Hollywood studio system. "It wasn't a dream, it was a place!" she cries piteously. "A real, truly live place! . . . Doesn't anyone believe me?"

Many, many people did believe her. Frank Baum's readers believed her, and their belief in Oz led him to write thirteen further Oz books, admittedly of diminishing quality; the series was continued, even more feebly, by other hands after his death. Dorothy, ignoring the "lessons" of the ruby slippers, goes back to Oz, in spite of the efforts of Kansas folk, including Auntie Em and Uncle Henry, to have her dreams brainwashed out of her (see the terrifying electro-convulsive-therapy sequence in the recent Disney film "Return to Oz"); and, in the sixth book of the series, she sends for Auntie Em and Uncle Henry, and they all settle down in Oz, where Dorothy becomes a Princess.

So Oz finally *becomes* home. The imagined world becomes the actual world, as it does for us all, because the truth is that, once we leave our childhood places and start to make up our lives, armed only with what we know and who we are, we come to understand that the real secret of the ruby slippers is not that "there's no place like home" but, rather, that there is no longer any such place *as* home—except, of course, for the homes we make, or the homes that are made for us, in Oz. Which is anywhere—and everywhere—except the place from which we began.

In the place from which I began, after all, I watched the film from the child's—Dorothy's—point of view. I experienced, with her, the frustration of being brushed aside by Uncle Henry and Auntie Em, busy with their dull grownup counting. Like all adults, they couldn't focus on what was really important: namely, the threat to Toto. I ran away with her and then ran back. Even the shock of discovering that the Wizard was a humbug was a shock I felt as a child, a shock to the child's faith in adults. Perhaps, too, I felt something deeper, something I couldn't then articulate; perhaps some half-formed suspicion about grownups was being confirmed.

Now, as I look at the movie again, I have become the fallible adult. Now I am a member of the tribe of imperfect parents who cannot listen to their children's voices. I, who no longer have a father, have become a father instead. Now it is my fate to be unable to satisfy the longings of a child. And this is the last and most terrible lesson of the film: that there is one final, unexpected rite of passage. In the end, ceasing to be children, we all become magicians without magic, exposed conjurers, with only our simple humanity to get us through.

We are the humbugs now.

—SALMAN RUSHDIE

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SILVER LINING DEPARTMENT

[*From a memo from the Lake View Cemetery Association, in Cleveland*]

TO: TRUSTEES
RE: FINANCIAL AND OPERATING REPORTS FOR THE FIRST MONTH ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1991.

Enclosed are the Financial and Operating Reports for the period ending November 30, 1991.

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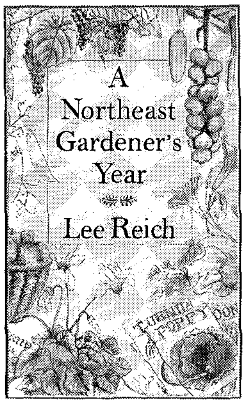
We hope that the early positive start will carry through the remainder of this year.

"Read it and grow wise."
-Roger B. Swain, Host, PBS Television's "Victory Garden"



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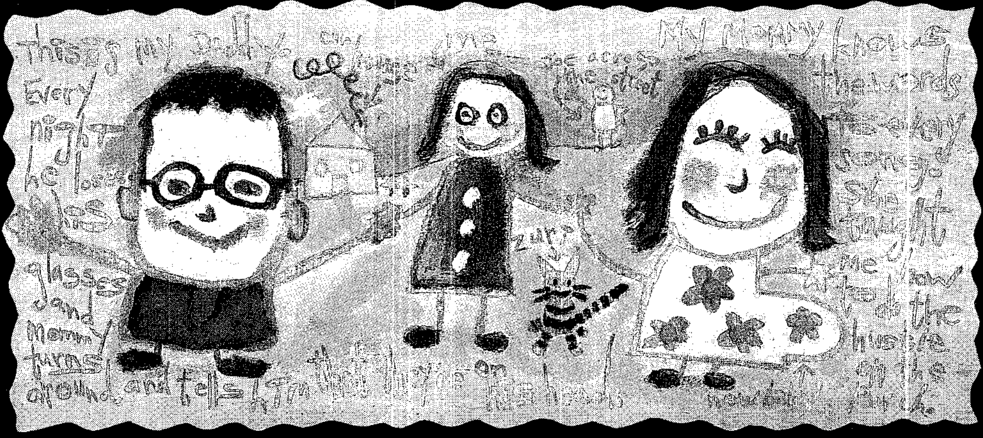
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me
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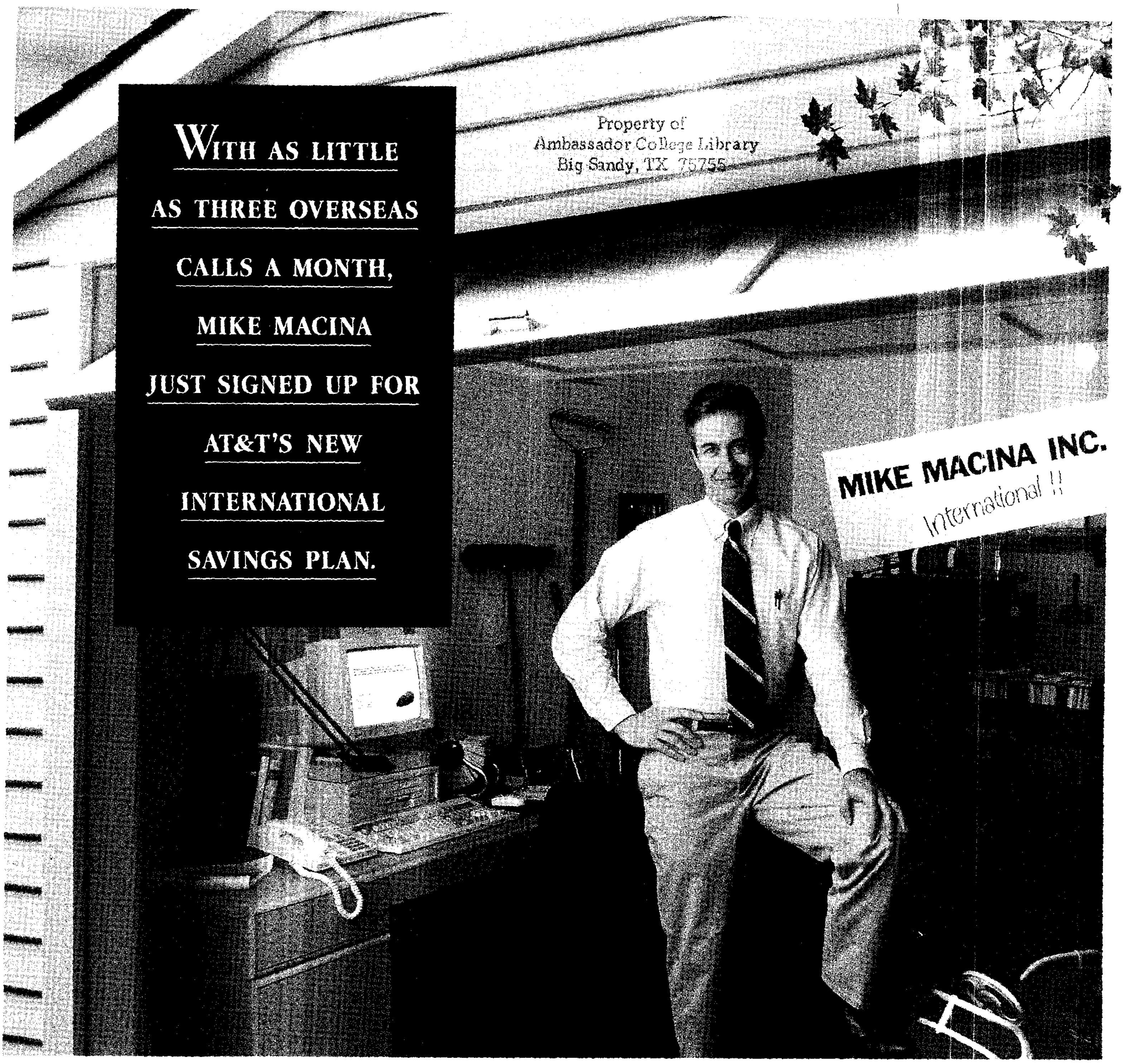
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